

2 KINGS

INTRODUCTION

First and Second Kings is the second in a series of three double books: 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. Originally, the double books were single books -- one book of Samuel, one of Kings, and one of Chronicles. The Septuagint translators were the ones who made the divisions, and they did so more or less for the convenience of the reader. I think that it probably was a very wise decision.

Although the writer is unknown, 1 and 2 Kings were written while the first temple was still standing ([1Kings 8:8](#)). Jeremiah is considered to be the traditional writer, while modern scholarship assigns the authorship to "the prophets."

The theme of these two Books of Kings is found in this expression that occurs nine times in 1 Kings: "as David his father." In other words, we are following the line of David, and each king was measured by the standard set by David. Very frankly, it was a human standard, and it was not the highest standard in the world. But we find that king after king failed to attain even to it. Thank God there were those who did measure up to it.

However, we will find that this section of Scripture is a sorry and sordid section. It is history, and it reveals the decline and fall of the kingdom: first the kingdom was divided, and then each kingdom fell.

There are key verses that summarize the thrust of these two books. The first key verses describe the decline and fall of the northern kingdom: "For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day" ([2Kings 17:22-23](#)).

The second key verse describes the fall of the southern kingdom: "And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land" ([2Kings 25:21](#)).

In 1 Kings we have the record of the division of the kingdom, and 2 Kings records the collapse of the kingdom. Considering the two books as a unit, they open with King David, and they close with the king of Babylon. They are the book of man's rule over God's kingdom -- and the results are not good, of course. The throne on earth must be in tune with the throne in heaven if blessings are to come and benefits are to accrue to God's people. Yet man's plan cannot overthrow God's purposes, as we shall see.

First and Second Kings are actually a continuation of the narrative that was begun in First and Second Samuel. These four books can be considered as a whole since they trace the history of the nation from the time of its greatest extension, influence, and prosperity under David and Solomon to the division, then captivity and exile of both kingdoms.

The moral teaching of these books is to show man his inability to rule himself and the world. In these four historical books we get a very graphic view of the rise and fall of the kingdom of Israel.

Outline For 1 And 2 Kings

I. Death of David, [1Kings 1](#) through [1Kings 2](#)

II. Glory of Solomon's Reign, [1Kings 3](#) through [1Kings 11](#)

A. Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom, [1Kings 3](#) through [1Kings 4](#)

B. Building of Temple, [1Kings 5](#) through [1Kings 8](#)

C. Fame of Solomon, [1Kings 9](#) through [1Kings 10](#)

D. Shame and Death of Solomon, [1Kings 11](#)

III. Division of the Kingdom

(See Chronological Table of the Kings of the Divided Kingdom, p. 227), [1Kings 12](#) through [2Kings 16](#)

IV. Captivity of Israel by Assyria, [2Kings 17](#)

V. Decline and Captivity of Judah by Babylon, [2Kings 18](#) through [2Kings 25](#)

Chapter 1

THEME: Fire from heaven protects Elijah from Ahaziah

[1Kings 22:51](#) tells us that "Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in Samaria. . . ." We pick up the story in 2 Kings at this point. In fact, there does not seem to be a proper division between 1 and 2 Kings. Ahaziah's reign in Israel is begun in 1 Kings and concluded in 2 Kings.

The king and the prophet take the place of the priest as God's instruments of communication.

In 2 Kings, the first chapter, Ahaziah, king of Israel and son of Ahab and Jezebel, fell down through a lattice and seriously injured himself.

Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease [[2Kings 1:1-2](#)].

I would be inclined to say he fell because he was drunk. This is only a guess. Then instead of going to the Lord God for help, Ahaziah -- greatly influenced by his mother Jezebel -- went to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron. Ahaziah's request for an oracle was a direct challenge to the Lord God of Israel. He wanted to know if he would recover from the effects of the accident.

But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?

Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed [[2Kings 1:3-4](#)].

This was one of Elijah's last missions. He went to meet the messengers and gave them this challenge. "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the God of Ekron?" Then he gave them God's unwelcome prognosis: Ahaziah would not recover, he would die. The messengers went back and reported to the king what Elijah had said.

Elijah Is Protected By God (1:7-18)

And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?

And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite [[2Kings 1:7-8](#)].

This furnishes us an interesting description of the physical appearance of Elijah.

Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.

And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty [[2Kings 1:9-10](#)].

Remember that Ahaziah the king was the son of Jezebel, the woman who had tried to kill Elijah. Apparently there was still a price on his head.

Elijah is quite a man, is he not? He simply did not fit in with the compromises of court life in that day.

There is much talk today about the fact that we should learn to communicate and learn to get along with everybody. May I say to you that this is not God's method. The compromise of the church and its leaders has not caused the world to listen to the church. As a matter of fact, the world is not listening at all. They pass the church right by. Why? The world will not listen until the church declares the Word of God. If the church preached God's Word, there would be communication.

Elijah managed to communicate. He was heard. People listened to him. He was a pretty rough type of an individual. The king sent another captain with fifty men, and he also ordered Elijah to come down from the top of the hill. What came down was fire from heaven which consumed the captain and his men.

And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight [[2Kings 1:13](#)].

This man asks for mercy, and God will extend mercy to him.

And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die [[2Kings 1:15-16](#)].

Elijah boldly repeated God's pronouncement.

So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.

Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? [[2Kings 1:17-18](#)].

This ends the line of Omri and Ahab.

Chapter 2

THEME: The translation of Elijah

This chapter brings us to the conclusion of Elijah's life. He is translated into heaven in a chariot of fire. Then Elisha comes into prominence. The chapter closes with the incident of irreverent hoodlums being attacked by bears.

Elijah's Departure (2:1-11)

And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el.

And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho [[2Kings 2:1-4](#)].

Elijah is trying to get Elisha to stay back. Elisha will not leave Elijah because he knows that Elijah is going to leave the earth that day. Elisha wants to be present when the Lord takes him home.

And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head today? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace [[2Kings 2:5](#)].

The interesting thing is that people, then as well as today, were turning to all kinds of people and places for information. This is the day when the fortunetellers and those who deal with the zodiac and the occult are handing out many suggestions. People are turning everywhere except to God. You won't get any information from these areas that you cannot get from God. The sons of the prophets had information that Elijah was going to leave, but Elisha already knew it. They could not tell him anything new.

And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground [[2Kings 2:6-8](#)].

The Lord had parted the River Jordan for Joshua and the people of Israel at least five hundred years before this; now He repeats the miracle for Elijah and Elisha.

And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so [[2Kings 2:9-10](#)].

Now don't miss that. Elisha actually was a greater prophet than Elijah. He had a double portion of the Spirit of God upon him.

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven [[2Kings 2:11](#)].

This is a spectacular conclusion of a spectacular life!

Elisha Receives A Double Portion Of Elijah's Spirit (2:12-14)

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over [[2Kings 2:12-14](#)].

This man Elisha is taking Elijah's place, and he demonstrates his faith. He takes Elijah's robe and smites the waters just as Elijah had done. The power is not in the robe nor in Elijah; the power is in God, and Elisha knows that. Elisha had the faith Elijah had, and it is faith in the God of Elijah. He asks the question, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?"

This is the important question today. Instead of looking to men or women, methods or some nostrum for help, as many people do, why not look to the Lord God of Israel? He is the living God. He is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look to Him, my friend.

Elisha took Elijah's mantle, smote the waters, and they parted. He crossed over the river to begin a new phase in his life.

Elisha Succeeds Elijah (2:15-24)

And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send [[2Kings 2:15-16](#)].

The sons of the prophets (the theological students of that day) were still watching and they saw Elisha part the waters and return across the Jordan River. They doubted that Elijah had really gone up. They suspected that the Lord had dumped him in some abandoned area. What a peculiar idea they had of God!

And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not? [[2Kings 2:17-18](#)].

Elijah was indeed gone, and there was no need to investigate. Elisha said, "I told you so!"

Then the men of the city of Jericho came to Elisha with a problem.

And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake [[2Kings 2:19-22](#)].

Elisha made the bitter waters sweet. This was his second miracle. Today you can see those waters in the valley at Jericho. I did not drink the water when I visited there because water out in the open in that land is apt to be contaminated. I am told, however, by those who were brave enough to drink it, that the water was sweet and delicious to drink.

Next followed an incident which has been criticized as much as anything in the Scriptures. This incident is pointed out with glee by the enemies of the Word of God who bemoan the brutal slaying of these poor little children.

First, let's look at the background. Elisha was returning from Elijah's translation when this event took place. The word had gone before him concerning what had taken place. As he went up to Bethel, "little children" mocked him. Elisha cursed them in the name of the Lord, and two female bears came out of the woods and "tare forty and two children."

Not only the critics but also many sincere believers have been stumped by this portion of Scripture. The scorner says, "You don't mean to tell me that God would destroy little children like that!" What is recorded here seems to contradict other portions of Scripture.

First of all we need to recognize that when we come into the world our human minds are more or less neutral. They are neutral on practically every subject but one, and that is an innate streak of rebellion against God. Man has an inborn bias against God. Man, first of all, is skeptical about the Bible. Man will believe anybody or anything except God. If you don't believe this statement, notice how people fall for the "scientific approach." Let a man on television put on a white coat and pince-nez glasses, make a statement about mouthwash, deodorant, or toothpaste, and everybody runs and buys it because it is "scientific." Well, my friend, that reveals the nature of man.

If a man is an honest doubter, he will find there is an answer to all the problems and questions that concern the Word of God. That does not mean that I can answer all of the problems, because I cannot. This is one question, however, that I can answer, and I want to spend a little time with it.

Now Elijah was succeeded by Elisha. In many respects Elisha was greater than Elijah. This will undoubtedly be a surprise to many people who consider Elijah one of the greatest prophets, and possibly one of the witnesses who will one day return to earth during the Tribulation ([Rev. 11:3-7](#)). If you want to measure these two men by the miracles they performed, Elisha performed the most miracles. Elijah was the man for the public. Elisha was the one who ministered personally to individuals. Because his ministry

was largely in this area, it was not quite as exciting and dramatic as Elijah's ministry. He was a gentle man in contrast to Elijah.

Elisha was a young man at the beginning of his ministry. On this occasion he was returning from beyond Jordan where Elijah had been caught up in a chariot of fire and taken to heaven. News of this event had spread like wildfire over the countryside. Many people knew about it as Elisha returned to Bethel. Probably the news media of the day carried the news about Elijah. I guess the Bethel Bugle had a headline about the prophet and the chariot of fire. The Bugle would not confirm the story, but they did report that there were those who had seen the event take place.

Bethel means "house of God." It was first mentioned by Abraham, then by Jacob. Bethel, however, did not continue to live up to its name. At the time of the division of the kingdom, Jeroboam, you will recall, placed one of the golden calves in Bethel for the people to worship so that they would not continue to go to Jerusalem to worship. There was also a school for false prophets at Bethel. It was, of course, an imitation of the school of prophets in Judah. It was in this atmosphere that the children of Bethel were educated. They were godless. They had no training. They had no discipline at home. I think Bethel was a great deal like Los Angeles, where I live. How ironical it is: Los Angeles means "the city of angels," and we have everything else but angels here.

Now Elisha is on his way to Bethel.

And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head [[2Kings 2:23](#)].

Then "little children" came out of the city. The accepted opinion is that these were precious little children. All of us are moved by children. I have a little grandson, and he has grandpa wrapped around his finger. These little ones really get to you. When you read this portion of Scripture, it touches your heart. If these "children" were beginners, primaries, juniors, or even junior high young people, I would have to admit that Elisha was rather cruel because what happened would be contrary to the teaching of the rest of Scripture.

The Lord Jesus said, ". . . Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" ([Matt. 19:14](#)). As you read the Bible, you will discover God's tender care of the little ones.

Remember that at Kadesh-Barnea the people of Israel refused to go into the land, and they gave the following excuse: "And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" ([Num. 14:3](#)). They felt that their little ones would be in danger. But God said to them in essence, "You should have trusted Me. You thought that I would not take care of your little ones. Well, although you will die in the wilderness, your little ones, who you thought were in danger, are going to inherit the land and dwell in it."

"Little children" is naar or nahar in Hebrew. It is used of Isaac when he was twenty-eight, of Joseph when he was thirty-nine, also for the Sodomites who attacked the home of Lot. You will find it used in other places in Scripture, and it does not refer to little children as we think of them. For example, [1Kings 12:8](#) says, "But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him." This verse is speaking about the time Rehoboam forsook the wisdom of the older men, the wise men, and consulted with the younger men who had grown up with him. The word translated "young men" is the same word translated "little children" in [2Kings 2:23](#). I am sure no one believes that Rehoboam was consulting with little juniors, or that he went to nursery school and talked things over with the little ones. They were young men. When Samuel came to anoint as king one of the sons of Jesse, you will remember that his sons were grown. As they passed by Samuel one by one, he said to Jesse, "Are these all thy children?" Well, the word children is the same word used in [2Kings 2:23](#). It is used to describe Jesse's grown sons. The youngest son, David, was not even there. The hoodlums who were taunting Elisha were young men, not little children. You will find this word used in many places in Scripture, and in every other place it is translated "young men." This was a crowd of young fellows.

They were students of the false prophets. They were a gang that mocked and ridiculed Elisha. They said, "Go up, thou bald head." What did they mean by that? They were telling him to do the same thing Elijah had done. They were saying, "Why don't you take off like Elijah did?" They were ridiculing the truth in Scripture that God will take a people out of this world.

This is the same attitude, Peter says, that will appear on the earth again in the last days. This incident in 2 Kings is given to us to let us know that God intends to judge those who ridicule the second coming of Christ. [2Peter 3:3-4](#) says, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." During the last days on earth there will be those who will ridicule believers about the coming of Christ. They will say something like, "Well, what is the matter? You haven't gone up yet. You are still hanging around. I thought you were going to leave us." This is the type of thing scoffers will say to believers. Many are already saying, "Where is the sign of His coming?" For this reason we ought to be careful today in the way that we teach the second coming of Christ. We should not go out on a limb. We should not become fanatics on the subject. We should handle it with care, even in a manner in which the Word of God handles it. So 2 Kings is just a little picture of the judgment that will come upon those who will ridicule Christ's return to earth. It is a fearful judgment.

And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them [[2Kings 2:24](#)].

It is an awful thing for a preacher to deny the deity of Christ and the work He did at His first coming. It is a terrible thing to deny and ridicule the second coming of Christ. This brings a very severe judgment.

Notice that they called Elisha "bald head." We do know something about this man: he had a bald head.

There is a great deal about judgment in the Word of God. We need, therefore, to get our facts squared away. When you understand what we are talking about in this section, there is nothing here that is out of line with the rest of Scripture. He pronounced a curse upon them. Elisha sounds like Elijah here. He also sounds like the Lord Jesus Christ who said, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" ([Matt. 11:21](#)). He went on to say, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell . . ." ([Matt. 11:23](#)). That is judgment, friends.

We are living in a day when there is a great deal of pussy-footing in our legal system. The lack of the enforcement of law on the part of some judges is a scandal; it is responsible for the lawlessness on every hand. It is responsible for the shooting down of policemen. It is not safe to walk our streets any more. The minds of people in this country have been brainwashed. When are we going to wake up? When gangs of young hoodlums terrorize our neighborhoods, there should be punishment. I personally heard a leading attorney recently tell a small group, privately, that these young lawbreakers should be taken out and publicly whipped, as they used to do in the early days. He said if that were done it would break up a lot of the lawlessness. May I say to you that after the bears did their work, nobody else around Bethel ridiculed Elisha -- you may be sure of that.

CHAPTERS 3 AND 4

Chapter 3

THEME: Miracles of Elisha

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years [[2Kings 3:1](#)].

Jehoram was the son of Ahab and Jezebel and successor of his brother Ahaziah, who died without having any children.

And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made.

Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom [[2Kings 3:2-3](#)].

He did not sin as Ahab had sinned, but he did cleave "unto the sins of Jeroboam" which was calf worship.

And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel [[2Kings 3:4-5](#)].

Moab was in subjection to Israel and paid tribute. When Ahab died, Moab attempted to regain her freedom, refusing to pay the tribute. Jehoram, therefore, gathered his troops together and made an alliance with Jehoshaphat to join forces with him to bring Moab back into subjection. When they were unable to find water for their troops, their campaign not only was halted, but they were in danger of being conquered by the Moabites. King Jehoshaphat, being a God-fearing man, suggested they call a prophet of God to give them direction. (We could wish he had asked for God's guidance before he formed this alliance with Israel's godless king.) Elisha's response is interesting and reveals his contempt for Jehoram.

And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee [[2Kings 3:13-14](#)].

Water And Victory (3:16-27)

Then God promises that there will be victory -- they will be given water and they will completely subjugate Moab.

Notice the remarkable way God accomplishes this.

And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches [[2Kings 3:16](#)].

The ditches are pits to retain the water that is coming.

And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water [[2Kings 3:20](#)].

The Moabite troops which are mustered to defend their country against Israel now look out toward the advancing armies.

And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood:

And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil [[2Kings 3:22-23](#)].

Thinking that the confederate kings had come to blows and the troops had destroyed each other, the Moabites forget about warfare and each man takes off to get his share of the spoil. This, of course, gives Israel a distinct advantage.

And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land [[2Kings 3:26-27](#)].

Human sacrifice was widely practiced by the Moabites. Undoubtedly he offered the sacrifice to his god Chemosh, hoping that by offering his heir, Chemosh would save him from the enemy. However, it was a signal victory for Israel, and certainly must have impressed them with the power and graciousness of the Lord God of Israel.

Chapter 4 contains five miracles performed by Elisha. While there is a similarity between the miracles of Elisha and Elijah, the miracles performed by Elisha are more extensive.

Chapter 4

Increase Of The Widow's Oil (4:1-7)

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen [[2Kings 4:1](#)].

Elisha apparently had known her husband. She reminds him that her husband was a true believer. When he died he left an unpaid debt which the creditor had now come to collect. If a borrower did not have personal property as security, his own person and that of his dependents would serve as security. Therefore the creditor could legally take the widow's sons as payment.

And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil [[2Kings 4:2](#)].

Elisha recognizes his responsibility to help this little family. The Mosaic Law insists that widows and fatherless children be cared for.

Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out [[2Kings 4:3-5](#)].

They had a regular oil well going in that house!

And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest [[2Kings 4:6-7](#)].

This is actually a greater miracle than the widow of Zarephath's unfailing cruse of oil in Elijah's day.

A Son For The "great Woman" Of Shunem (4:9-17)

This gracious woman, living in Shunem, entertained Elisha whenever he passed through her town.

And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither [[2Kings 4:9-10](#)].

Since then, there have been many believers who have in their homes what they call the "prophet's chamber." As I have traveled about from place to place, holding Bible conferences, I've stayed in many prophet's chambers. I could tell you about people all across this country today, wonderful Christian folk, who have a room where preachers and missionaries are entertained and feel at home. You do not know what that means in the lives of many of God's people today.

Now Elisha appreciated this home that was always open to him. Lying on the bed one day, he determined to somehow reward this thoughtful woman for her kindness. Elisha summons his servant Gehazi:

And he said, What then is to be done for her? and Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.

And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life [[2Kings 4:14-17](#)].

Life Restored To The Shunammite's Son (4:9-17)

Years later when her son was a grown child, he died. Elisha restored him to life, using the same method that Elijah had used ([1Kings 17](#)); that is, personal contact with the dead

child which brought life. The great principle here is that when we are dead in trespasses and sins, personal contact with Jesus Christ brings life. In Him we have life. He is life.

Poisonous Pottage (4:40-41)

The fourth miracle in this chapter concerns food for the sons of the prophets, who were actually students -- theological students. This was during a time of famine and one of the boys went out to gather any wild fruits or vegetables that he could find. They concocted a stew of what they found.

So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof.

But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot [[2Kings 4:40-41](#)].

Elisha, you see, makes it harmless.

One Hundred Men Fed Miraculously (4:43-44)

A man, attempting to be faithful to the Mosaic Law, brought the firstfruits of his harvest to the sons of the prophets since Jeroboam had driven the Levitical priests from the country. Because it was a small amount, the servant balked at inviting one hundred men to dinner!

And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.

So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the LORD [[2Kings 4:43-44](#)].

This reminds us of the times our Lord fed crowds of four thousand and five thousand with a few loaves and fish.

Chapter 5

THEME: Naaman the Syrian

The Healing Of Naaman (5:1-14)

Chapter 5 is one of the most interesting chapters in the life of Elisha the prophet. It reveals that he was probably as rugged as Elijah and that he had a good sense of humor. I believe the Lord has a sense of humor and likes to use men who have a sense of humor. You cannot help but smile when you read this episode although it deals with a man in a very desperate situation.

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper [[2Kings 5:1](#)].

This first verse gives us a thumbnail sketch of Naaman. He was captain of the host of Syria. Although he was a pagan, he was both a great man and an honorable man. By him the Lord had given Syria deliverance -- this is a remarkable thing. I am sure that you will agree that he was a man the Lord had used. You will find that the Lord uses men in this world who are not Christian. That may seem strange to you, but you don't have to read very far in the Word of God to find that He used men like Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Alexander the Great. Here we are told He used Naaman. We are also told that Naaman was a mighty man of valor. All of these things mentioned count in the high court of heaven. God does not despise these things. This heathen man was used of God: "By him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria." Even though we find all of these fine things are said of him, we have this to add, ". . . but he was a leper." There are many folks in the world today about whom nice things can be said although they are not Christians. You can say that they are fine men and women and have done fine things. But you have to conclude it all by saying that they are sinners -- "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" ([Rom. 3:23](#)). No matter how nice people might be, they are all sinners in God's sight.

Lepers were not excluded from society in pagan nations. It is interesting that God gave Israel a law about segregating lepers because it kept the disease from spreading. Today lepers are put in a colony and kept separate from society. God put these instructions in His Book centuries before any pagan nation realized they were necessary. This is something for you to think about, friend. It is not until you come into what we would call a "civilized day" that men decided to separate lepers from the rest of society.

Leprosy in Scripture is a type of sin. One reason is that it was incurable by human means. Only God can cure sin and save a sinner. Naaman had many fine points, but he was a sinner. He tried to cover up his leprosy, but he could not cure it. Many people today whitewash sin. What they need is to be washed white, and only Christ can do that.

And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife [[2Kings 5:2](#)].

This is one of those unknown, unnamed characters in the Bible. She was a young maid, a little Hebrew girl, and a great person. To me she is as great as Queen Esther, Ruth the Moabite girl, Bathsheba, Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel. This little maid "waited on Naaman's wife."

And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy [[2Kings 5:3](#)].

This little Hebrew maid was in no position to give orders, but one day she uttered a sigh and said, "Oh, that my master would go down and see the prophet in Samaria. He would recover him of his leprosy" -- Elisha, you see, had quite a reputation. Well, someone -- probably his wife -- heard what she said, and it reached the ears of the king of Syria.

And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel [[2Kings 5:4](#)].

The king of Syria was delighted to hear that something could be done for this very valuable man, and he immediately sent him to the king of Israel with a letter of introduction and a very handsome reward.

And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me [[2Kings 5:5-7](#)].

This letter from the king of Syria requesting that the captain of his army be healed of leprosy greatly disturbed the king of Israel. He exclaimed, "I am not God. I cannot heal him!" The message had been sent to the wrong person. The king of Israel read the message, but it should have gone to Elisha. I always feel like anyone who claims to have a gift of healing is almost being blasphemous, friend. The king of Israel said, "I don't claim to be able to heal anyone." Elisha did not claim to be a healer either, but he was in contact with the Great Physician. The king of Israel, however, came to the conclusion that the king of Syria was trying to start a quarrel with him -- why else would he send the captain of his army with this impossible request?

And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying,

Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel [[2Kings 5:8](#)].

Elisha said, "Send Naaman down to me."

So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean [[2Kings 5:9-10](#)].

Naaman was from a great kingdom in the north. In fact, his nation was at that time bearing down upon the nation Israel. Syria had already gained victories over Israel, and Naaman expected the red carpet to be rolled out for him. And what happened?

Elisha told him to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times! Of course this hurt the pride of Naaman. Elisha actually received this man rudely. In fact, Elisha did not receive him at all -- he did not even go to the door to receive him. You would think the prophet would bow and scrape to this great captain of the hosts of Syria. Instead, Elisha sent his

servant to tell Naaman to go and wash seven times in the Jordan River. Do you think Naaman is going to accept this advice?

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper [[2Kings 5:11](#)].

Naaman was upset because he was a very proud man. He had never received treatment like this before. The Lord is not only going to heal his leprosy, He is also going to heal him of pride. When God saves you, He generally takes out of your life that thing which offends. Pride just happens to be one of the things God hates.

We hear a great deal about the fact that "God is love," but God also hates. You cannot love without hating. You cannot love the good without hating the evil. If you love your children, you would hate a mad dog that would come into the yard to bite your little ones. You would want to kill that mad dog. It is true that God loves man, and in unmistakable language God declares that He hates the pride in man's heart. [Proverbs 6:16-19](#) lists seven things that God hates. First on His list are these: "A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood." Do you see what is number one on God's hate parade? It is a proud look. God says He hates that. He hates that as much as He hates murder. [James 4:6](#) says, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Pride is the undoing of man. It is a great sin. In [Proverbs 16:18](#) we read, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." [Proverbs 11:2](#) says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." Finally, [Proverbs 29:23](#) says, "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit." Why does God hate pride? The definition of pride is "excessive self-esteem." It is inordinate self-esteem. It is more than reasonable delight in one's position and achievement. Paul put it like this, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" ([Rom. 12:3](#)). Pride is placing an excessive price on self. It is demanding more than you are worth. Have you ever heard it said, "I wish I could buy that man for what he is worth and sell him for what he thinks he is worth"? Pride is the difference between what you are and what you think you are. It was the pride of Satan that brought him down. That was his sin. Pride was also the sin of Edom. Of Edom God said, "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD" ([Obad. 1:4](#)).

Man's pride runs counter to God's plan; and, whenever they meet, there is friction. There is no compromise. It is always a head-on collision. You see, God's plan of salvation is the supreme answer to man's pride. God lays man low. God takes nothing from man. Paul could say of himself when he met Jesus Christ, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" ([Phil. 3:7](#)). Paul gave up religion. Paul gave up everything he had been; he rated it as dung -- he said, "I just flushed it down." Christ and pride do not go together. You cannot be proud and at the same time trust Christ as your Savior. If you trust Him, my friend, you will lay all of your pride in the dust.

The story of Naaman is the finest example that we have of a man being shorn of his pride. He was a great man, to be sure. God listed all the things that marked him out as a man of character and ability. But he was a leper. He was a sinner. God not only healed him of leprosy, He healed him of his pride. Believe me, Elisha insulted him. Naaman thought Elisha would come out to him, stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. You know, that is religion. It is as if Naaman were saying, "Oh, if only I could have gotten into a healing line, and had him put his hand on me, and call upon God and pray. If only he had poured a little oil on me. That would be great." That is religion, friend. When God heals a person, it is by faith. He lays your pride in the ground. You do not go to a man for healing; you go to God, the Great Physician.

Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage [[2Kings 5:12](#)].

This is one place where I agree with Naaman. I saw those beautiful rivers in Lebanon. I went up to the city of Byblos from Beirut, and I stopped at a place called, "Calling Cards of the Great Men of the Earth," because it is a place where many notable men have left inscriptions on the side of a cliff. I walked along a river there about half a mile and looked at the beautiful clear water rippling over the rocks. The Jordan is a muddy little stream, friend. It is not nearly as pretty as some of the streams in Lebanon. I rather agree with Naaman. He said, "Why in the world should I go and dip in the Jordan? Why not dip in a stream with clean water?"

This has an application for us. A lot of folks hate to come to the Cross of Christ. It is a place of ignominy. It is a place of shame. People don't want to come to the cross. Instead they want to do something great. That is what Naaman wanted to do. Oh, the pride of Naaman! He said the rivers of Damascus were better, and they were. He was disgusted with the impudence and impertinence of the prophet to tell him to wash in the Jordan. But, my friend, you will have to come to the Cross of Christ. You do not come to Jesus and stand before Him as a proud man. You cannot say that you have something you are resting on when you come to Him. You come, "just as I am without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me," and shed for every person. All you have to do is accept His work on the cross.

And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? [[2Kings 5:13](#)].

As Naaman was riding away in a rage, his servants attempted to reason with him, "If the prophet had asked you to do something great, you would have done it." How many people today would like to do some great thing for salvation? You don't have to do anything; He has already done it for us. All we have to do is receive it. We come as beggars. Naaman would have to come that way also.

Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came

again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean [[2Kings 5:14](#)].

Naaman went down to the Jordan and dipped in the water seven times according to Elisha's instructions. I would give almost anything in the world if I could have been there and watched him. I think every time he went down into the water he would come up and look at himself. He probably said, "This is absurd. I am not getting clean -- I am not getting rid of my leprosy!" Then he went down into the water again. But he did dip himself in the Jordan seven times, and he was healed.

Gehazi's Sin And The Penalty (5:15-27)

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way [[2Kings 5:15-19](#)].

Now, deeply grateful for his healing, Naaman is pressing Elisha to accept these rich gifts he has brought as a token of his appreciation. But Elisha will not accept payment for what God has done.

Now Elisha had a servant named Gehazi. He hated to see that handsome reward slip by, so he took out after Naaman.

So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?

And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him [[2Kings 5:21-23](#)].

Why did Gehazi take the offering from Naaman? Greed!

And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither [[2Kings 5:24-25](#)].

Gehazi allowed the servants to carry the gifts as far as the tower; then he took them himself and sent the servants back to Naaman so that Elisha would not see them. With the gifts safely stowed away, Gehazi rushes back to his job, acting as if nothing had happened.

And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow [[2Kings 5:26-27](#)].

The great sin of Naaman was pride. The great sin of Gehazi was greed. My beloved, greed is leprosy of the soul.

Chapter 6

THEME: The floating ax head and danger at Dothan

In chapter 6 we will see two more thrilling experiences that Elisha had. Elisha was an outstanding prophet, although he was different from Elijah, Elijah's ministry was public; Elisha's ministry was more private (we have just seen how he dealt with Naaman, the captain of the Syrian host). Elijah was spectacular -- he brought down fire and rain from heaven. Elisha was a quiet man; he shunned the spotlight. However, both prophets were God's men at God's time.

The Ax Head (6:1-7)

Our attention will center now on Elisha. I do not think that any miracle so reveals the character of a person and a prophet as the miracle of the floating ax head.

And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us [[2Kings 6:1](#)].

Now this reveals something of the popularity of Elisha. He taught in a theological seminary, the school of the prophets. The school grew, and they needed larger quarters. This was due to the presence and the popularity of Elisha. The strength, I feel, and the value of any school is the character and the ability of those who teach. It is not the methods but the men that are important, especially in a Christian school.

Now notice what they did. In order to enlarge the school they said,

Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye [[2Kings 6:2](#)].

The students built their own school. That would be an unusual thing in our day. Today everything has to be given to the students in order to get them through school and, if it doesn't suit them, they rebel. But these students went out to work, and Elisha encouraged them in it.

And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go [[2Kings 6:3](#)].

This is a refreshing and thrilling verse. It is an insight into the winsome character of Elisha. It reveals that he was popular with the students. By the way, do students ordinarily want to take their teacher with them beyond the boundary of the campus? They'd like to leave him there. But these asked Elisha to go with them.

So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood [[2Kings 6:4](#)].

Now a small tragedy takes place. I say "small" because the ordinary person would call this a trivial incident.

But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed [[2Kings 6:5](#)].

There is something here that is quite interesting. It reveals that God is concerned about the small events in our lives. You remember that Paul said to the Philippians, "Pray about everything," and he did not mean to leave anything out.

The loss of an ax head may seem insignificant to us, but to this poor student it is not so small. The fact of the matter is, it is pretty big. In our day of gadgets when we can go down to the hardware store and get an ax head of about fifteen different shapes, this does not seem important. But in that day it was of tremendous importance because any kind of iron tool or weapon was scarce. And if you want to know something about that period, notice just one verse from 1 Samuel: "So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found" ([1Sam. 13:22](#)). Two swords for an entire army! It lets you know something of the scarcity of weapons and of tools in that day. So you can understand that the loss of an ax head was very important to this young man -- and, of course, he had borrowed it.

Most commentators, I have discovered, romp all over this student. They give him a demerit for carelessness and a demerit for the fact that he borrowed something. Well, if this man were guilty, why did not Elisha, his teacher, rebuke him? Elisha did not. Elisha absolved him from all charges. He was not careless, but actually was very careful. Obviously there was a danger of an ax head coming off, and it happened often enough so that God included it in the Mosaic Law: "And this is the case of the slayer, which shall

flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past; As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live" ([Deut. 19:4-5](#)).

God made this law because it evidently was something that occurred quite frequently. Now this man revealed his carefulness by cutting the wood so that there was nobody out in front of him. He was standing so that if the ax head came off it would go into the Jordan River. He was aiming it in a safe direction.

The second fault they find with him is that he borrowed it. Well, I think that I am qualified to speak for this fellow here. He was a poor seminary student, and he could not afford an ax in that day -- no more than I could have owned a Cadillac when I was in seminary. He just could not have done it. He had to borrow it. I do not think that this poor fellow should be criticized on these two points.

In fact, I have a question to ask. Who loaned this student an old ax with a head that would come off? That's the fellow I would like to talk to. I imagine that fellow is the same one who today gives secondhand clothes and old Christmas cards to missionaries and thinks he is serving the Lord.

Now this boy was distressed, and he could not reimburse the owner. He would have to face him without the ax and he didn't know what to do. Now notice Elisha's concern. "And the man of God said, Where fell it?" Let's stop there for just a moment because there have been those who have said, "Why did Elisha ask that question if he was a prophet? He would have known where the ax head fell." He knew, and he knew something else also. He knew that he needed to test that young man. By the Spirit of God he needed to test him. Notice that this young man knew exactly where that ax head went into the water. Don't tell me he was careless. Elisha is not doing it only for a test but for another reason. The Spirit of God knew that in the twentieth century there would be critics of this miracle, and, as they've explained away every other miracle, they would say, "Well, after all, the water was clear, and anybody could see where it was." The question Elisha asked precludes anyone saying that the water was clear. And if you know anything about the Jordan River, you know it was muddy. I have heard many romantic, wonderful things about that river, but to me it was the most disappointing thing that I saw. You talk about polluted water! You talk about a muddy little stream! You talk about a dirty thing! That's the Jordan River. Because it was muddy, Elisha said, "Where did it fall?" The young man knew right where it was, but he could not get it out because he could not see it. The water was not clear. Now notice what took place.

[And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim \[2Kings 6:6\].](#)

This was a miracle, and I do not think that you can explain it away. This is one miracle -- not sensational, not as spectacular as going to heaven in a chariot of fire -- that is great in its simplicity. It is a miracle when iron swims. It is contrary to all known physical laws. I recognize that since the day that the first iron ship was launched, ships of iron and steel

now float on the seven seas. And that's no miracle. But, my friend, it was a miracle for an ax head on the bottom of the Jordan River to float to the top like a cork! I know it is not startling, not sensational; it's simple. This is Elisha's method. Elijah would have never done it this way. In fact, I don't think Elijah would have bothered with a thing like that. He would have said, "Son, forget it." But not Elisha.

An ax head, dormant on the bottom of the muddy Jordan, is raised, resurrected, if you please, restored to the owner, replaced on the handle, and it becomes useful again, utilitarian and functional. That's really a greater miracle than these others because there is a tremendous spiritual message here for us today. Man today is like that ax head. He has slipped off the handle. He has fallen. He is totally depraved.

So Elisha cut down a stick. He cast it into the waters of death. That stick is the Cross of Christ. Our Lord came down to that cross, and He went down into the waters of death for you and me. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" ([1Pet. 2:24](#)).

Man today can rise from the waters of death and judgment through Christ. He can be placed back on the handle of God's plan and purpose for him, and he can be geared into God's program. Paul testifies, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" ([Phil. 4:13](#)). And further, ". . . this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 3:13-14](#)). It is no longer necessary for any person to live an aimless and useless life. Having no purpose in life is the thing that is driving literally thousands of people to suicide. This past week a half dozen college students committed suicide, and the whole explanation was, "It isn't worth living." My friend, of course it's not worth living when you are an old ax head down at the bottom of the muddy Jordan. It is not until Christ lifts you by His cross (His death for you and me) and places us back in His plan and purpose that life becomes worthwhile. A young man (not yet twenty-one years old) said to me, "My life is a failure." I said to him, "Your life hasn't even begun, and you are talking about being a failure!" How we need God today! The greatest miracle today, friend, is not to go to the moon. It is not even to go to heaven in a chariot of fire. Rather it is to go to the highest heaven when we are still sinners and have trusted Christ. That's the greatest miracle there is -- to be lifted out of the muck and mire of this world and to be given meaning for our lives and enabled to live for God.

Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it [[2Kings 6:7](#)].

All you have to do is reach out the hand of faith today and take it, for He died for you. He rose again in order that He might lift you up. All you have to do from your position is to reach out the hand of faith and trust Him.

Danger At Dothan (6:8-17)

The next episode begins with a very familiar ring. It sounds like a page out of the morning newspaper: "Then the king of Syria warred against Israel." They have been at it

for a long time; actually, it was an old conflict even at that time. The present conflict between Israel and the Arab world has a definite Bible background.

Now notice the situation.

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? [[2Kings 6:8-11](#)].

The king of Syria was disturbed because every plan he made and every place he went was discovered by the king of Israel. He came to the conclusion that there was a spy in his camp. He called together his military and attempted to ferret out the traitor. "Which one of you is for the king of Israel?" Honestly there was no one -- all of them were loyal to him.

And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber [[2Kings 6:12](#)].

The prophet Elisha had "bugged" even the bedroom of the king of Syria and knew everything he said. And the way he "bugged" them in that day was that the Lord revealed this to him.

So the king of Syria decided to eliminate Elisha. He first sent out those to spy out where he was and they located him in Dothan. Dothan is a place north of Jerusalem about sixty miles. It means "two wells" and was a place where there was good pasture, a place where flocks were brought. At the present time and for several years Dr. Joseph Free, of Wheaton College, has been carrying on an excavation in that place. I am told that there is really not much to see there because it never was a very prominent place. But it was the headquarters of Elisha at this particular time. The king of Syria sends in the military, and they entirely surround the place. The servant of Elisha goes out in the morning, I suppose to get water out of one of those wells (which are still there today); he looks around and sees that the city of Dothan is surrounded by the hosts of Syria. You can be sure of one thing, he is alarmed. He comes back and reports to Elisha, and he says to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do? The city is surrounded. We might just as well give up. It looks hopeless for us! What can we do under these circumstances?"

And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them [[2Kings 6:16](#)].

And I want to tell you, that seemed rather unrealistic because here were the hosts of Syria outside, and Elisha was very much alone with his servant -- and that servant was frightened to death. So Elisha prayed, and his prayer is interesting.

And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha [[2Kings 6:17](#)].

The question now arises: Is this the stated policy of God in dealing with His own?

Well, I have discovered that a great many Christians today have become great escape artists. They are sort of spiritual Houdinis. They can tell you about miraculous instances of God delivering them and leading them. But many other saints have to bow their heads in shame and say, "I've had no such experience, and I have had no such leading from God. It must mean that either I am out of touch with Him, or He is not for me at all." My friend, let's go back to Dothan. The answer, I believe, is here. Dothan is mentioned only two times in the Bible, and I think for a definite reason.

Another man approaches Dothan, a young man. In fact, he is a boy seventeen years of age, and danger and destiny await him there. Actually he is walking like a helpless and unsuspecting animal into a trap, and I feel like warning him, "Don't go to Dothan!" But that foolish "Houdini" Christian I referred to is apt to say, "You don't need to worry, preacher. No harm is going to come to him. He's not going to be hurt at Dothan. He will be home next week because God will deliver him. After all, there are chariots of fire around Dothan, and he will be delivered." But is he? Joseph's brothers conspire against him. They want to murder him and, after they cool off just a little, the wiser of the brothers recommends that he be sold into slavery. My friend, that was worse than death in that day. It was a living hell to be sold into slavery, yet that is what is happening to this boy, seventeen years of age -- and he happens to be God's man! Where are the chariots of fire? Just because you cannot see the chariots of fire does not mean they are not there. They are there. I see more evidences of the hand of God in the life of Joseph than I see in the life of Elisha who performed miracles, yet God never appeared to Joseph, never performed a miracle for him. But I see that God used this seeming disaster, and Joseph recognized it later on at the end of his life. He could say to his brothers, ". . . ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good . . ." ([Gen. 50:20](#)). And at Dothan the chariots of fire are there, but they are going to be used in a different way.

Syrian Soldiers Are Blinded (6:18-23)

And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha [[2Kings 6:18](#)].

Elisha did a very unusual thing. He asked God to smite the hosts of the Syrians with blindness, and God did just that. Then Elisha led them all the way into Samaria and told them that he was leading them where Elisha was! When they got to Samaria, he turned them over to the king of Samaria. The king wanted to slay them, but Elisha said, "Don't do that. Feed them and send them home."

And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel [[2Kings 6:23](#)].

Both the power and graciousness of Israel's God, as represented by Elisha, must have really shaken the Syrian king. He abandoned his war against Israel. However, at a later date Ben-hadad (this, by the way, is a title rather than a proper name) again besieged Samaria, as we shall see in the next episode.

Ben-hadad Besieges Samaria (6:24-31)

And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.

And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for four-score pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver [[2Kings 6:24-25](#)].

The famine was so severe that a donkey's head (imagine how little meat there would be on that, and it could only be boiled, I guess, and made into soup or stew!) was sold for a ridiculous price. They were really having inflation!

The next few verses reveal the horrible fact that they were actually eating their children because of the desperate shortage of food.

Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day [[2Kings 6:31](#)].

We don't know why the king considered Elisha as responsible for the horrors of the siege. Probably he thought it was in Elisha's power to provide food in a miraculous way and was going to execute him because he did not.

The episode is continued without a break in the next chapter. This is another thrilling incident in the life of this man Elisha.

Chapter 7

THEME: Elisha's promise of plenty is fulfilled

Chapter 7 continues the narrative of chapter 6. Holding Elisha responsible for the siege, the king of Israel sends an executioner to slay him. However, God forewarns Elisha and gives him the good news that the famine will end on the following day.

Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria [[2Kings 7:1](#)].

A measure of fine flour actually means about four pecks, which would be about a bushel. One shekel would probably be worth about sixty-five cents. That means the inflation would be over. They would be having a real discount sale on flour. How could such a

thing come to pass? How could food be brought into the city when the Syrian host was camped outside the walls allowing no one in or out? Apparently the king believed Elisha's audacious prophecy because he spared his life at this time. However, his right-hand man scoffed at the idea.

Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof [[2Kings 7:2](#)].

This prediction was literally fulfilled the next day.

Now the scene shifts to a pathetic group of hopeless men outside the city gates.

And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there [[2Kings 7:3-5](#)].

Because they were lepers, they were excluded from society and were dependent upon relatives or friends bringing them food. Now that everyone inside the city was starving, of course, there was no surplus for them.

As we have said, leprosy is a type of sin. The application for us is that before we came to Christ we were in a predicament equally as desperate. We were like the lepers, sitting among the dead, having no hope and without God in the world.

The lepers, realizing they had nothing to lose, decided to throw themselves upon the mercy of the enemy. When they reached the camp of the Syrians, they found it deserted. What had happened to that great host -- probably a hundred thousand or more?

For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.

Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life [[2Kings 7:6-7](#)].

The sound of an approaching army had put them in panic. The Syrians did not march in an orderly way. When they took off, it was every man for himself. They were traveling at night and they were traveling fast.

And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence

silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it [[2Kings 7:8](#)].

In that day, the army carried with it all the food they would need. This was a long campaign -- they were besieging Samaria, the city there on the hill. In their scramble to get away, they had left everything, all the supplies they had. After the Syrian army had fled, the lepers went into the camp and gorged themselves on gourmet food for as long as they could eat. Then they found and hid more gold and silver than they would ever need.

Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household [[2Kings 7:9](#)].

Now the excitement is over, and they begin to come to themselves. "Here we are gorging ourselves when the people in the city are starving. We've got to go tell them the good news!"

There is a great spiritual lesson for us here. At this moment you and I are enjoying the Word of God. Today is a day of good tidings, and we sit here and enjoy it. What about getting the Word out to others? What are you doing to share the Word of God with those who are starving spiritually? You ought to be busy getting the Word of God out to needy hearts. One man told me, "I can't speak, I can't teach, I can't sing, I can't do much of anything except make money." Believe me, God has given him a talent for making money. He simply cannot lose money. Everything he touches turns to gold. I believe his ability is a gift from God, and he certainly is using it to get the Word of God out. God expects each of us to use the talents He has given us to publish the good tidings which are the Word of God. We must not hold our peace in this desperate hour!

After the lepers told the king the good news, the children of Israel went into the abandoned Syrian camp and found enough food to feed an army of several thousand. There was an abundance of food. The supermarkets in Samaria had a big sale; you could buy food cheap. You did not have to buy animal heads for food anymore. You could buy filet mignon instead! The prophecy of Elisha was literally fulfilled.

CHAPTERS 8--10

Chapter 8

THEME: Judgment of the wicked

The people of Israel soon forgot God's marvelous deliverance and returned to their sin. So again they suffer the judgment of a famine.

Elisha's Prediction Of Famine (8:1-2)

Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.

And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years [[2Kings 8:1-2](#)].

Elisha told the Shunammite woman to leave the land and go to another place because there was going to be a seven-year famine in the land. She believed and obeyed Elisha. She took her household into the land of the Philistines and lived there during the period of the famine. The famine, once again, was a judgment of God upon the northern kingdom.

Frankly I believe that the different tragedies that have struck our land in recent years have been a warning to our nation. The earthquakes, hurricanes, storms, and other tragedies that have swept across our land have, I think, been warnings from God to stop and think and change our ways.

The Shunammite's Land Restored (8:3-6)

And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.

And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.

And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now [[2Kings 8:3-6](#)].

When the famine was over and the Shunammite woman returned to her former home, she apparently found others living on her land. At the same time, in God's providence, the king was inquiring about some of the lesser known acts of the prophet Elisha, and Gehazi was telling him about Elisha raising the Shunammite woman's son from the dead. The king made a ruling that her property was to be restored to her as well as all the fruit of the land.

Elisha Predicts Hazael's Treason (8:7-29)

Here is another incident in the life of Elisha that is quite remarkable. You will recall that the king of Syria had attempted to capture Elisha and slay him. But now the king is an old man, and he is sick.

And Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither [[2Kings 8:7](#)].

The king thought that Elisha would restore him to health. In view of the fact that his own life might hang in the hands of Elisha, of course the king would not touch one hair of his head.

And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? [[2Kings 8:8](#)].

Hazael went to meet Elisha. He is the captain of Ben-hadad's hosts. There is a reference to him in [1Kings 19:15](#) which says, "And the LORD said unto him [Elijah], Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria." So Hazael had been anointed king many years earlier; he is just waiting around for old Ben-hadad to die. You can well understand that it would be very difficult for the king's successor -- whether it be a son, a general, or someone else -- to shed very many tears at his funeral because it was his funeral that would bring his successor to power. So Hazael went out to meet Elisha, but I don't think he went with a great deal of enthusiasm. He took an impressive gift to Elisha, which was from the king.

So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die [[2Kings 8:9-10](#)].

Notice the message that Elisha gave: "You will surely live, but you won't live." That sounds like double-talk. Can't you just see Hazael when he hears that the king is going to die? A smirk comes over his face, and then a smile because he is going to be king.

And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept [[2Kings 8:11](#)].

Elisha's knowing eyes bored into him until Hazael felt embarrassed. Then Elisha began to weep.

And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child [[2Kings 8:12](#)].

Hazael is amazed, "Why weepeth my lord? Why are you weeping about this man who sought your life?" Elisha was not weeping for the king. Elisha loved his people. He loved his God. He loved the service God had given to him -- he was a prophet. The heartbreak because of Ben-hadad had been bad enough, but Hazael is going to bring even more heartbreak to the people. Although Elijah had anointed Hazael king, and Hazael professes that he isn't going to do evil, Elisha knows better.

And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria [[2Kings 8:13](#)].

I don't know whether or not he was a dog, but he did it.

So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldest surely recover.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead [[2Kings 8:14-15](#)].

This is what Elisha foresaw. In substance he had said, "Of course the king will be glad to hear he is going to recover, and that's what you are going to tell him, but you won't let him recover."

The rest of this chapter will be less confusing if you follow along carefully the Chronological Table of the Kings on page 227.

And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.

Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD [[2Kings 8:16-18](#)].

Now you can see why God doesn't go for mixed marriages. Although Jehoram was the son of the God-fearing king Jehoshaphat, he married the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and under her evil influence, "he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel."

Now we begin to see that Israel is going downhill as a great nation. Both Edom and Libnah revolted against them. Then Jehoram died, and Ahaziah became the new king of Judah. He joined forces with Joram, king of Israel, to war against the Syrians. Joram was wounded and went back to Jezreel to be healed from the wounds which he suffered at the hands of the Syrians.

And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick [[2Kings 8:29](#)].

In the next chapter we shall see what happened to him while he was in Jezreel recovering from his wounds.

Chapter 9

Jehu Is Anointed King Over Israel (9:1-13)

As we begin this chapter, we need to keep in mind that Ahaziah, the king of Judah, went up to visit Joram at Jezreel because Joram was wounded in battle and was in Jezreel recovering. Apparently he was a very sick man.

And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead:

And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber;

Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead [[2Kings 9:1-4](#)].

The young prophet did the thing Elisha commanded him to do. You will notice that Elisha is not spectacular in what he does. You would think he would not have sent a young prophet to anoint a king but that Elisha would have done it himself. Samuel, you remember, had anointed Saul as king, and he also came to David and anointed him king. You would naturally think that Elisha would want to be the one to anoint the king, but he did not. He sent a young prophet to anoint Jehu king, and he did it secretly and privately. This is probably the reason he sent a young man to do it -- no one would suspect the motives of a young prophet.

So Jehu was anointed king. He was one of the bloodiest rascals you will meet on the pages of Scripture, and yet he did the will of God in many respects. God said that He would cut off from Ahab every male member and none would be left in Israel.

And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah:

And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled [[2Kings 9:9-10](#)].

Jezebel will not escape God's judgment for her wickedness.

Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication.

And they said, It is false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.

Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king [[2Kings 9:11-13](#)].

When it was known that Jehu had been anointed king, it put everyone in a flurry, and they began to move. They blew the trumpets and said, "Jehu is king." Joram is sick in Jezreel and Ahaziah is there visiting him. What is going to happen in Jezreel now?

Jehu Executes Joram (9:20-24)

Now Joram down there in Jezreel doesn't know that God has removed him from his throne and has anointed Jehu king over Israel. As Joram and Ahaziah, king of Judah, are there visiting, the watchman reports that a company of horsemen is coming. Joram sends a messenger to meet them with the question: "Is it peace?" -- are you bringing good news or bad? Instead of answering his question, Jehu tells him to fall in line behind him. Now the second watchman reports to Joram.

And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously [[2Kings 9:20](#)].

The messengers who were sent out to meet Jehu never came back to report to the king because Jehu is coming to exterminate this king. So Joram and Ahaziah themselves ride out to meet Jehu.

And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? [[2Kings 9:22](#)].

Obviously no loyal subject would dare make such a statement about the queen mother. Joram instantly recognizes that Jehu is leading a revolt.

And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah.

And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot [[2Kings 9:23-24](#)].

As Joram was trying to escape, Jehu drew his bow and put an arrow through his heart. Notice that Joram is called Jehoram in this instance. Both names have the same meaning in Hebrew and are used interchangeably for both the king of Israel and the king of Judah.

Jehu Executes Ahaziah (9:27-28)

Jehu had come to Jezreel to exterminate Joram. Ahaziah, as we have already seen, was visiting Joram. He was keeping bad company, by the way, with those of the house of Ahab. Ahaziah was in the wrong place at the wrong time!

But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there [[2Kings 9:27](#)].

Jehu's followers pursued and mortally wounded Ahaziah.

And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David [[2Kings 9:28](#)].

Jehu Executes Jezebel (9:30-37)

And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window [[2Kings 9:30](#)].

Now we come to the slaying of Jezebel, the queen mother, which was indeed a frightful thing. She was a bloody, mean, terrible woman. She was a member of a royal family, the beautiful daughter of Ethbaal, king of Zidon. Probably she had been one of the most beautiful women of her day and of all history. As a young woman I think Jezebel could compare with Helen of Troy, Salome, Cleopatra, and Catherine de Medici. When Ahab and Jezebel married, it was the society event of the year. The best people of the two kingdoms were there. There was a surplus of royalty gathered. It was respectful and dignified -- even Elijah could not find fault with the event. The common people of both realms celebrated. It should also be added that the demons of hell joined the festivities. They laughed with glee, and the Devil was glad. However, crepe was on the gate of heaven and the angels wept. Instead of wedding bells, it was a funeral dirge. That was heaven's view of this marriage. The world saw things differently, as it always does. Why is the world optimistic and heaven pessimistic? God looks on the heart. Man has only a limited view of things.

Jezebel is one of the most remarkable women in history. She was capable, she was influential, and she had a dominant personality. Her evil influence was felt in three kingdoms and extended beyond her lifetime. Her notorious life became a proverb. She poured a stream of poison into history. Scripture never mentions her again until you come to the Book of Revelation at the conclusion of the Bible.

Her name is suggestive. It means "unmarried, chaste." You have here a veiled suggestion of an abnormality and a perversion. She was probably cold and sexless, yet she was beautiful and alluring. Strong men yielded to her seductive charms. No one resisted her, not even Ahab. She dominated him and ruled the northern kingdom.

She introduced the worship of Baal. She imported 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Astarte. She was reckless, violent, rapacious, and ferocious. She killed God's prophets. God's people went underground. She engineered the marriage of her daughter to the house of David. During her long reign as the consort of Ahab, her will was supreme; no person dared to oppose her -- except Elijah. She is the Lady Macbeth of Shakespeare and the Clytemnestra of Greek tragedy. Her crimes were many. Blood flowed freely from her influence. None resisted her. For a time it seemed as if God was in hiding and doing nothing.

Finally Jezebel committed her crowning crime. She arranged the death of Naboth so that Ahab might possess his vineyard. Her deed was high-handed, cold-blooded murder. It was a dastardly deed, and heaven could no longer remain silent. God's patience was exhausted, and He sent Elijah to announce His judgment. The day of reckoning came. First Ahab was killed, and the dogs licked up his blood just as the prophet had said they would. Now it is Jezebel's turn. She will be trodden underfoot, and the dogs will eat her to the point that there will not even be enough left for a decent burial. Fourteen years had elapsed since the death of Ahab and undoubtedly Jezebel did not believe that God's word would ever be fulfilled in her case. She was unmoved. She defied God. She stayed on in Jezreel, thinking perhaps that the death of Ahab was just a coincidence. She felt that she

could get by and nothing would happen to her. But, you know, there is a law of God written in neon lights in every sphere on the crossroads of life: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" ([Gal. 6:7](#)). ". . . For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" ([Luke 6:38](#)).

This is one of the most sordid and sadistic chapters in history. It is gruesome, it is ghastly, and it is a gory sight. Added to that, it is grizzly. It is one of the most revolting and repulsive scenes on the pages of Scripture. Jezebel is the queen mother. She has been living in luxury in the palace at Jezreel. The terrible prophecy of that horrible man Elijah has not been fulfilled. Suddenly out of the north came a swift chariot. It was Jehu driving furiously. He had just slain two kings, the king of Judah and the king of Israel -- her own son, Joram. What does she do? She paints her eyes and arranges her hair, and looks out of a window. This proud queen still thinks she can seduce her captor -- captivate him with her charms. She had a grandson twenty-three years old. She is no longer young; she is an old woman. No secret formulas for lotions, powders, sprays, and creams can make this faded queen look attractive. As she looks from an upstairs window at Jehu, she begins with flattery.

And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? [[2Kings 9:31](#)].

Her inference is, "Can't we get together and talk this over? Come up and see me sometime."

And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.

And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot [[2Kings 9:32-33](#)].

Jehu is unmoved and untouched by Jezebel's words. He is without pity or mercy. Jezebel did not awe Jehu. She had no appeal for him. He did not even respect her. He said, "Throw her down!" And the eunuchs threw her down and she broke open like a ripe watermelon. This is the most frightful, terrible, and vivid picture in all of the annals of tragedy. Hammond says that history presents no parallel to such an indignity. It is truly unprecedented. A queen mother was customarily treated with respect.

And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter [[2Kings 9:34](#)].

How could Jehu enjoy a hearty meal after he had done this awful thing? As someone has said, he was "a fiend in human form." He was a rough soldier with no courtesy and certainly no chivalry. All he had was crude ambition. He did not shrink from any crime. He was depraved and degraded.

And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.

Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel:

And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel [[2Kings 9:35-37](#)].

When Jehu sent servants out to bury Jezebel, the dogs had already devoured her. The dogs had a big gourmet meal. But, my friend, there was no laughter in heaven because of this. There was no mourning, either. Perhaps in heaven it was being said -- as the Book of Revelation tells us that it will be said in the future -- "For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" ([Rev. 19:2](#)). The horrible death of Jezebel illustrates again the truth of [Galatians 6:7](#): "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Chapter 10 continues the judgment on the house of Ahab through the murderous heart of Jehu.

Chapter 10

Ahab's House Is Judged (10:1-11)

And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children, saying,

Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour;

Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house [[2Kings 10:1-3](#)].

Jehu is giving the sons of Ahab the privilege of fighting for the throne of Israel. Not one of the seventy sons is willing to tackle Jehu.

Then the elders of Israel -- to save their own necks -- prove their allegiance to Jehu by slaying these seventy sons of Ahab.

So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining [[2Kings 10:11](#)].

Jehu Massacres The Royal Princes Of Judah (10:12-15)

And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. And as he was at the shearing house in the way,

Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah:

and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen.

And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, even two and forty men; neither left he any of them [[2Kings 10:12-14](#)].

After dealing with the house of Ahab, Jehu was on his way to assume the throne in Samaria. He met forty-two sons (or nephews) of Ahaziah, the king of Judah. He slew them also. It is interesting to note, however, that one of them was spared, and he was a descendant of the house of Saul.

And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot [[2Kings 10:15](#)].

Jehu, still on his way to Samaria, met Jehonadab, the Rechabite. The question he put to him was, "Are you friend or foe?" Jehonadab was the founder of the very strict sect of Rechabites mentioned by Jeremiah. He was undoubtedly a man of influence. Apparently he heartily approved of Jehu's anti-Ahab policy and was willing to lend his support by being seen in Jehu's chariot.

Jehu Exterminates Baal's Worshipers (10:18-19)

And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.

Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal [[2Kings 10:18-19](#)].

The next thing Jehu did was to bring together all of the prophets of Baal by issuing a false statement that he would offer a great sacrifice to Baal. Jehu had no intention of worshiping Baal. When all the prophets came together, he slew them. His sacrifice to Baal was a trap and the prophets fell right into it.

Jehu Follows The Sins Of Jeroboam (10:29-30)

While it is true that Jehu slew the prophets of Baal, he did not turn to the prophets of God.

Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Beth-el, and that were in Dan [[2Kings 10:29](#)].

Jehu went back to the calf worship that Jeroboam had established. He did not worship Baal, nor the gods of the Zidonians, but he engaged in the calf worship that apparently came out of the land of Egypt.

Jehu did not turn to the Lord, but because he was zealous for the Lord, God gave him an earthly reward -- that is, He extended the reign of his house for four generations.

And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel [[2Kings 10:30](#)].

Although Jehu was a very brutal man, God makes the wrath of man to praise Him!

Israel Is Smitten By Hazael Of Syria (10:32)

In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel [[2Kings 10:32](#)].

What is happening here? The northern kingdom is getting ready to go into captivity. From now on there will be a decline which will ultimately end in disaster. They will be carried away into captivity by Assyria.

The chapter concludes with the death of Jehu who had been king of Israel for twenty-eight years.

CHAPTERS 11 AND 12

Chapter 11

THEME: Joash, the boy king

The story of Ahab and Jezebel is not a pretty section, and you probably thought we were through with them, but we are not. While it is true that Jehu had eliminated all the line of Ahab in the northern kingdom of Israel, a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel had married into the southern kingdom of Judah and was at this time the queen mother. Believe me, she took after mama and papa and was the meanest of them all. Her name is Athaliah, and she is going to perform an unbelievably terrible act.

Athaliah Murders Her Grandchildren (11:1-3)

And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal [[2Kings 11:1](#)].

As long as Ahaziah had lived Athaliah actually had been the queen because she controlled her son. She was very much like Jezebel. Now that Ahaziah was dead, a grandson would come to the throne and Athaliah did not want that. She was afraid that she would not be able to control him, and she would lose her position. So what did she do? She slew all the line of David that she could get her hands on. Talk about a bloodthirsty act! She tried to exterminate the line of David. This was another attempt of Satan to destroy the line that is leading to the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan attempted to wipe out the line of David so that the Savior would not be born. Down through the ages the Devil has tried to eliminate the Jews. In Egypt the Lord preserved Moses, and the Jews were not slain but allowed to leave Egypt. Haman, in the Book of Esther, attempted to

exterminate the Jews but was foiled. Satan was behind each of these attempts. Now here is this woman Athaliah attempting to exterminate the line of David.

Although she thought she had killed all of them, she missed one, as we are told here.

But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land [[2Kings 11:2-3](#)].

She came to the throne after her son was killed and for years she was ruling alone -- that was the way she wanted it. But all the while this little boy Joash was growing up.

Joash Comes To The Throne Of Judah (11:4-12)

And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son [[2Kings 11:4](#)].

When Joash (sometimes called Jehoash) was about seven years old, Jehoiada sent for the rulers, the captains, and the guard. He revealed to them that the king had a son. When they discovered that there was a son in the line of David it brought encouragement, joy, and hope to their hearts. They had had enough of this woman Athaliah anyway, and they jumped at the chance to dethrone her.

And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house;

And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.

And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king [[2Kings 11:5-7](#)].

They were to "compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand." Extra precautions were taken to preserve the life of this little fellow because his life would not have been worth a plugged nickel if Athaliah had been able to get to him. She would have slain him without a qualm although he was her grandson! This woman was as heartless as Jezebel. So the young boy was well protected until the time he could be brought before the people.

And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple.

And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and

anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king [[2Kings 11:11-12](#)].

This was a great day for the southern kingdom to crown a king in the line of David. Things had looked very discouraging there for a time.

Athaliah Is Slain (11:13-16)

And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD [[2Kings 11:13](#)].

Of course Athaliah had not been invited to the coronation of the king. She evidently was in the palace of David on Mount Zion, which was situated right above the temple area. When she heard the clamor and noise in the temple area, she went there to see what was going on.

And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason [[2Kings 11:14](#)].

This, of course, was Athaliah's idea of treason.

But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.

And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain [[2Kings 11:15-16](#)].

Athaliah tried to flee. There was no way in the world for her to have her trial transferred to another district where she could be expected to receive a fair trial. They just executed her as she fled and saved an appeal to the supreme court. They got rid of her, which was, in my opinion, the proper thing to do at that time.

Revival (11:17-21)

The removal of Athaliah took a dark cloud off the southern kingdom. There was a new king, but naturally this little boy had to have counselors to rule in his stead because he was so young. One of them was Jehoiada who had engineered bringing Joash to the throne and executing Athaliah.

And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people [[2Kings 11:17](#)].

This is the beginning of a return to God. Jehoiada the priest now leads in a movement to return to the worship of Jehovah. The worship of Baal was prevalent; it had penetrated even into Judah. Probably the people were still going to the temple of the Lord, but they were worshipping Baal at the same time.

The same thing is going on today. Many people are religious on Sunday and then live for the Devil the rest of the week. There are many church members doing that today, and they wonder why the church is dead! The explanation is not found in a building; it is found in people. That is where the deadness lies at the present time.

And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD [[2Kings 11:18](#)].

This is the beginning of a great spiritual movement that is nothing short of a revival.

And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.

And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house.

Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign [[2Kings 11:19-21](#)].

What a day of rejoicing this was to have a descendant of David back on the throne and the wicked foreign usurper and her temple of Baal gone from the land!

Chapter 12

The Reign Of Jehoash (joash) (12:1-9)

In the twelfth chapter we have the reign of Jehoash, and we will see that it is Jehoiada the high priest who is engineering it. This is the beginning of a great spiritual movement that I would call revival.

At this juncture I would like to have a roll call of kings. There was a total of nineteen kings who reigned over the northern kingdom of Israel. There was a total of twenty kings who reigned over the southern kingdom of Judah. Among the nineteen kings who ruled over Israel, not one of them could be labeled a righteous king. Actually the only thing you could say about them was that every one of them was a bad king -- there was not a good one in the lot. In the southern kingdom of Judah there were twenty kings, and only ten of them could be considered good. Five of the kings were exceptional, and during their reigns there were five periods of reformation and revival. All of the reformation and blessing was incubated in the nest of spiritual revival. These brief periods of respite kept the fires burning on the altars that were all but extinguished at other times. Five times revival flared up and swept through the nation -- not a fire of destruction but of construction and instruction. God visited His people with the heaven-sent times of refreshing. There was a turning to the Word of God and a return to the worship of God. There was power and prosperity.

When a revival comes, my friend, there will be new joy in the church. There will be renewed power in the church. There will be a new love. First, however, there must be a

return to the Bible. A return to the Word of God has brought about every great spiritual revival. I personally believe that we can have a true revival today. Years ago Dr. Griffith Thomas said, "I cannot see anywhere in Scripture that revival of the true church is contrary to the will of God." Dr. R. A. Torrey also said, "There is no such teaching in Scripture that revival is contrary to the will of God." Dr. James M. Gray said, "We recall nothing in the epistles justifying the conclusion that the experiences of the early church may not be repeated today." My friend, let's do our part in getting out the Word of God so that God will be able to do a real work of grace in our time.

In chapter 12 we see Joash (also called Jehoash) as an adult.

In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba [[2Kings 12:1](#)].

Joash (or Jehoash) began his reign as a child of seven and continued until he was forty-seven years old. His mother was Zibiah of Beer-sheba. Remember how the mother's names are often given because mothers have a tremendous influence on their sons.

And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him [[2Kings 12:2](#)].

Joash was taught in the Word of God. My friend, what we need today are not empty-headed politicians who are everlastingly coming up with nostrums and criticizing all other parties and politicians, thinking only they have the answer. May I say to you, we need men today who are instructed in the Word of God and who know God today. We need a spiritual renewing in this land, and it can only come through the Word of God.

But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places [[2Kings 12:3](#)].

"Revival" did not mean that everyone had turned to God. Many were still sacrificing and offering incense in the high places. Even among the priests there were those who were not revived.

And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,

Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found [[2Kings 12:4-5](#)].

The temple was in disrepair. It needed to be repaired. The priests took the money that was supposed to be used to repair the breaches of the temple and used it for other things.

But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the

house? now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house [[2Kings 12:6-8](#)].

It is the same old story today. I think, very candidly, that you can test Christians and churches by their use or abuse of money. Many people in churches say, "Let's make So-and-So the treasurer or put him on the board of deacons because he is a good business man." May I say to you that you had better find out whether or not he is a spiritual man. That is the important thing.

What did they do? They had to prepare a locked box so that the money would be safe and the priests could not get their hands on it.

But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD [[2Kings 12:9](#)].

I think this box was a good idea. Anyone can juggle figures, and I have seen officers who handle the money do just that -- it is an absolute disgrace. "Joash's chest" is used today by many organizations to raise money. I wonder sometimes if people who use it recognize its background. The chest was secured so that some deacons and preachers and other religious racketeers could not get their hands on the offerings. This was a good idea that you might want to use sometime.

Temple Treasures Buy Off Hazael (12:17-20)

Although there had been a great spiritual movement in the land, the nation was beginning to go downhill.

Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.

And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem [[2Kings 12:17-18](#)].

In other words, Joash was buying time. He was trying to buy off Hazael, king of Syria.

And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla [[2Kings 12:19-20](#)].

We will talk more about revival when we get to the two Books of Chronicles. Joash was just forty-seven years old when he died. His servants killed him, and he was buried with

his fathers in the city of David. Joash had been a good king. We will find that his son Amaziah will also be a good king.

Chapter 13

THEME: The final acts of Elisha

Friend, this is a rugged portion of Scripture; yet it can minister to our hearts. This is an especially good section for the rulers of nations. We are following both kingdoms of Israel and Judah. In the north the ten tribes constitute the northern kingdom, and in the south the tribes of Judah and Benjamin constitute the southern kingdom. In the south the line of David is reigning. That is the line that will be followed right on into the New Testament to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we have seen, the line of David was almost eliminated by Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, who married into the family of David.

Chronological Table of the Kings of the Divided Kingdom

Judah

King Reign Character Prophet

1. Rehoboam 931-913 B.C. (17 yrs.) Bad Shemaiah
2. Abijah 913-911 (3 yrs.) Bad
3. Asa 911-870 (41 yrs.) Good
4. Jehoshaphat 870-848* (25 yrs.) Good
5. Jehoram 848-841* (8 yrs.) Bad
6. Ahaziah 841 (1 yr.) Bad
7. Athaliah 841-835 (6 yrs.) Bad
8. Joash 835-796 (40 yrs.) Good Joel
9. Amaziah 796-767 (29 yrs.) Good
10. Azariah 767-740* (52 yrs.) Good Isaiah
(or Uzziah)
11. Jotham 740-732* (16 yrs.) Good Micah
12. Ahaz 732-716 (16 yrs.) Bad
13. Hezekiah 716-687 (29 yrs.) Good
14. Manasseh 687-642* (55 yrs.) Bad Nahum
15. Amon 642-640 (2 yrs.) Bad
Habakkuk
16. Josiah 640-608 (31 yrs.) Good Zephaniah
Jeremiah
17. Jehoahaz 608 (3 mo.) Bad
18. Jehoiakim 608-597 (11 yrs.) Bad
19. Jehoiachin 597 (3 mo.) Bad
20. Zedekiah 597-586 (11 yr.) Bad

(Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah)

*Co-regency

Chronological Table of the Kings of the Divided Kingdom

Israel

King Reign Character Prophet

1. Jeroboam I 931-910 B.C. (22 yrs.) Bad Ahijah
2. Nadab 910-909 (2 yrs.) Bad
3. Baasha 909-886 (24 yrs.) Bad
4. Elah 886-885 (2 yrs.) Bad
5. Zimri 885 (7 days) Bad
6. Omri 885-874* (12 yrs.) Bad
Elijah
7. Ahab 874-853 (22 yrs.) Bad Micaiah
8. Ahaziah 853-852 (2 yrs.) Bad
9. Joram 852-841 (12 yrs.) Bad Elisha
10. Jehu 841-814 (28 yrs.) Bad
11. Jehoahaz 814-798 (17 yrs.) Bad
12. Jehoash 798-782 (16 yrs.) Bad
Jonah
13. Jeroboam II 782-753* (41 yrs.) Bad Amos
- Hosea
14. Zechariah 753-752 (6 mo.) Bad
15. Shallum 752 (1 mo.) Bad
16. Menahem 752-742 (10 yrs.) Bad
17. Pekahiah 742-740 (2 yrs.) Bad
18. Pekah 740-732* (20 yrs.) Bad
19. Hoshea 732-721 (9 yrs.) Bad

(Capture of Samaria and captivity of Israel)

*Co-regency

Jehoahaz Reigns Over Israel (13:1-2)

In chapter 13 we find that Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, reigned over Israel for seventeen years. He followed in the sinful steps of Jeroboam. Actually, there is nothing very sensational or interesting about his reign. Many people feel that sin brings excitement into life. There is nothing quite as boring as sin after a while. The man who starts drinking reaches the day when he is a drunkard; and, at that point, he is as boring as anyone can possibly be. And his life loses its purpose. The same thing is true of any individual who indulges in sin. This period of history is very boring. There is excitement only when God is moving. How we need Him today on the scene!

In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom [[2Kings 13:1-2](#)].

Jeroboam is the one who instituted calf worship in Israel. He led Israel away from the worship of the true God and led them into sin. When Ahab and Jezebel came to the throne, they went way beyond that. They began an active worship of Baal, which actually was demonism. Now Jehoahaz, like his father Jehu, does not go into Baal worship, nor sink into the depths of sin like Ahab and Jezebel did. He does go as far as Jeroboam did, however, and that is bad enough.

Repentance Of Jehoahaz (13:3-9)

Because of Israel's sin, God allowed the king of Syria to come against Israel.

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all their days.

And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them [[2Kings 13:3-4](#)].

This man knew he was in danger and in trouble. So in fear he turns to the Lord.

(And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime [[2Kings 13:5](#)].

Notice how gracious God is. The minute the king called upon Him, He heard and answered prayer! He delivered the people from Syria's oppression. My friend, you and I today do not realize how good God is and how good He is to you and me today. Oh, how wonderful He is!

Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria).

Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing [[2Kings 13:6-7](#)].

We see the goodness of the Lord in the life of Jehoahaz. The king called upon God and He answered. But the king and his people went on in sin, and they continued their idol worship. The king of Syria so destroyed the defense of Jehoahaz that he was never able to properly defend his kingdom again.

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead [[2Kings 13:8-9](#)].

Here we have the record of the death of Jehoahaz. This is the record of man: The king is dead, long live the king.

Jehoash Reigns Over Israel (13:10-11)

Another king comes to the throne of the northern kingdom.

In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years [[2Kings 13:10](#)].

Now we come to a very confusing period because the names of the kings in both kingdoms are similar, if not identical. It is difficult to know who is reigning, where he is reigning, and the circumstances of the reign. I am not so sure but what the Lord left it that way for a definite reason.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: but he walked therein [[2Kings 13:11](#)].

Jeroboam was the standard. When a king reached his level of sin, God always judged.

Elisha's Death: His Prophecy Is Fulfilled (13:14-19)

It was at this time that Elisha fell sick; it was the illness that brought death to him.

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof [[2Kings 13:14](#)].

Elisha had been a tower of strength to the northern kingdom in a way that Elijah had not been. (When the news of Elijah's translation reached the palace, I imagine there was a celebration party!) However, Elisha had been a tremendous help to the king, and he was heartbroken when the prophet became ill.

And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows [[2Kings 13:15](#)].

When the king visits him, Elisha does not just accept his sympathy and flowers. He is still a prophet of God, and he is giving God's message to him.

And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them [[2Kings 13:16-17](#)].

Well, Joash is not noted for his faith. Although he is weeping over the prophet who is dying, he is not a man of great faith, and he doesn't believe God is going to give him the victory over Syria.

And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.

And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice [[2Kings 13:18-19](#)].

Because he didn't have the faith that God would give him deliverance, discouragement caused him to quit.

Many wonderful projects for God never come to fruition, are never executed, because a child of God meets opposition or discouragement. He gives up, and says, "The project is not in God's will." That is the attitude of Joash -- he smote only three times. He is saying by this, "I don't think God will see me through." Today I see so much soft "faith." Folk sit on the sidelines and engage in wishful thinking. They say, "Oh, I want to do something for God." And the next time I see them, they are still sitting there. God expects you to get on the move for Him. If you believe God can use you, then get busy! Elisha gives us a very practical lesson here.

The Miracle At His Tomb (13:20-25)

And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

And it came to pass as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet [[2Kings 13:20-21](#)].

Even in death Elisha was a miracle-working individual. What a tremendous tower of strength he had been in that nation.

But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet [[2Kings 13:22-23](#)].

While God is punishing Israel with the word of Hazael, He does not allow the oppression to go too far.

So Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.

And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel [[2Kings 13:24-25](#)].

In other words, as his faith, so was it done unto him -- three times God gave him victory.

CHAPTERS 14--16

Chapter 14

THEME: Good and bad kings of Israel and Judah

Amaziah's Reign Over Judah (14:1-22)

Now we come to the reign of Amaziah over Judah. As was indicated before, Amaziah was a good king. He reigned for twenty-nine years.

In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah [[2Kings 14:1](#)].

The fact that there are two kings by the same name is certainly confusing. The chronological table will help clear up the confusion.

He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem [[2Kings 14:2](#)].

Amaziah's mother was Jehoaddan. The mother of these kings will receive the credit if their sons are good kings and the blame if they are bad kings. Amaziah was a good king so he must have had a wonderful mother.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did [[2Kings 14:3](#)].

Amaziah, the son of Joash, succeeded to the throne of Judah, and we are told that he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord although he failed to measure up to David's standard.

We also find that the civil war between the two kingdoms continued during this particular period.

Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.

And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.

He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers [[2Kings 14:19-22](#)].

Amaziah fled to the city of Lachish, where there was a fortress which offered refuge, to avoid capture by conspirators.

Jeroboam II Reigns Over Israel (14:23-25)

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher [[2Kings 14:23-25](#)].

Jeroboam did evil in the sight of the Lord. He did, however, restore the border of Israel, according to Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet. This is a historical reference to Jonah who wrote the Book of Jonah. This confirms the fact that Jonah was a real person and prophet in Israel. Finally Jeroboam II died and Zachariah came to the throne. We are moving toward the end of this nation.

Chapter 15

Azariah (uzziah) Reigns Over Judah (15:1-4)

In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.

Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;

Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places [[2Kings 15:1-4](#)].

In many ways Azariah (Uzziah) was a good king. However, he did something that he should not have done: he intruded into the priest's office. For this he was smitten with leprosy ([2Chron. 26:15-21](#)). It broke Isaiah's heart when he died because Isaiah was afraid Azariah's successors would lead the nation back into idolatry. Azariah's fears were well-grounded, for his grandson did just that. We will spend more time on the reign of Uzziah when we come to Chronicles and Isaiah.

In Israel Zachariah, the last of the line of Jehu, was slain by Shallum after he had reigned for only six months. Shallum did not do very well, either. He reigned for only one month and was overthrown and slain by Menahem. Menahem reigned for ten years and did evil as had Jeroboam.

At this time Pul, king of Assyria, came against Israel, and Menahem paid one thousand talents of silver to preserve his kingdom. It was a dark period for the nation. At his death, his son Pekahiah succeeded him to the throne but reigned only two years, when Pekah, his captain, conspired and slew him.

During the reign of Pekah, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, came against Israel and took captive the tribe of Naphtali. Pekah was slain by Hoshea. Jotham reigned in Judah, and was recognized as a good king.

Jotham Reigns Over Judah (15:33-35)

Now we return to the kings of Judah and the son of Azariah (Uzziah).

Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok [[2Kings 15:33](#)].

He is rated as a good king, and the Lord records the name of his mother.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD [[2Kings 15:34-35](#)].

He also tolerated the idolatry which would eventually send his people into captivity.

As we begin chapter 16, let me say that if you enjoy history, you will find this section intensely interesting. If you are looking for spiritual lessons, you will find some very practical things in this section. Much of this part of God's Word is extremely helpful. Remember, all of these things happened as examples for us.

Chapter 16

Ahaz Reigns Over Judah (16:2-20)

Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel [[2Kings 16:2-3](#)].

Pekah reigned twenty years before he was murdered. In the seventeenth year of Pekah's reign in Israel, Ahaz began his reign as king of Judah. Ahaz was not a good king.

And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree [[2Kings 16:4](#)].

He walked in the wicked ways of the kings of Israel. He did the terrible thing of offering children as sacrifices to heathen gods -- probably to Merodach (Marduk) or to Baal. This practice was about as low as a person could sink spiritually, and this is the thing Ahaz did. We are told that he "sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." In other words, Ahaz went the whole route into idolatry and pagan and heathen worship.

Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him [[2Kings 16:5](#)].

In the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 7, there is an extended section on this. It is a very important section, because in it is the prophecy of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Isaiah is prophesying to this man Ahaz who will not listen to God. So Isaiah challenges him to trust God. Then Ahaz appeals to Assyria for help. This opens the door for Assyria to come down and ultimately take the northern kingdom into captivity.

At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day [[2Kings 16:6](#)].

"Unto this day" means, of course, up to the time that this record was written.

In this verse the word Jew is used for the first time in the Bible. There are those who hold that Jew applies only to those of the tribe of Judah. However, notice that here it refers to folk in the northern kingdom of Israel -- in fact, up on the border of Syria. As we shall see, all twelve tribes were given that name.

So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.

And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria [[2Kings 16:7-8](#)].

And so the Assyrians are bribed. They come to Ahaz' aid first by attacking Damascus in Syria and then by taking the city.

And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof [[2Kings 16:10](#)].

He wanted this altar copied and erected in the temple of God. All the while Isaiah was prophesying to him and against him for what he was doing.

And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones [[2Kings 16:17](#)].

Ahaz is showing his utter disrespect for the temple of the true and living God.

And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead [[2Kings 16:18-20](#)].

Ahaz mutilated the house of God and seems to have stripped it of its elaborate ornamentation.

The chapter concludes with the death of Ahaz and the record of the fact that his son Hezekiah reigned after him. It is an amazing thing that a godless man like Ahaz would have a son like Hezekiah, the story of whose reign we shall see in a following chapter.

Chapter 17

THEME: Israel goes into captivity

These are the reasons God permitted Israel to go into captivity:

1. Disobeyed God ([v. 13](#)) -- "Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets."
2. Doubted God ([v. 14](#), see also [2Chron. 36:15-16](#)) -- "Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God."
3. Defied God ([v. 15](#)) in that they refused to observe the sabbatic year for 490 years -- "To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years" ([2Chron. 36:21](#)).

The story of this nation is the story of every individual.

Hoshea's Reign (17:1-5)

In chapter 17 we come to the end of the line as far as Israel is concerned. The ten northern tribes are carried into captivity by Assyria.

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him [[2Kings 17:1-2](#)].

He is not as bad as Ahab (and Jezebel), nor as bad as Ahaziah, but he is bad enough.

Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.

And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years [[2Kings 17:3-5](#)].

We are introduced to Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. He captured the northern kingdom and exacted tribute from them. When he discovered that king Hoshea had formed a conspiracy against him and was not paying his tribute, he besieged Samaria. Samaria was the city that Omri, the father of Ahab, had built. Ahab built a palace there. It was one of the most beautiful spots in the land. Now the king of Assyria besieged it.

Israel's Captivity (17:6)

In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes [[2Kings 17:6](#)].

There are those who say that the ten tribes are lost; that is, the tribes have popped up in Great Britain from where they spread to the United States. This is a nice theory which ministers to the pride of many folk who would like to believe that they are members of the lost tribes, but this idea of ten lost tribes is entirely man-made. You will not find it in the Word of God. For example, in the New Testament James wrote in his epistle, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting" ([James 1:1](#)). Apparently James did not think the tribes were lost. The folk who hold this theory believe the ten tribes were lost when they went into Assyrian captivity. When the Jews returned to their land, you will find that some out of all the tribes came back. Actually, a small percentage of the people returned. Several million Jews went into captivity and only about 65,000 returned to Palestine.

Sins Which Caused Israel's Captivity (17:7-23)

For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods,

And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made [[2Kings 17:7-8](#)].

The Lord had been very patient with these people. Over a period of over two hundred years (after the division of the kingdom) the Lord had given them every opportunity and ample time to return to Him. But they did not. They continually went off into idolatry. The Word of God is very clear that he sent them into captivity because they insisted on worshipping other gods.

And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchman to the fenced city.

And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree [[2Kings 17:9-10](#)].

On top of the hills and under the trees pagan worship was carried on. Israel indulged in this gross immorality and licentiousness.

And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing [[2Kings 17:11-12](#)].

God had put the heathen out of the land for their immorality and idolatry. Do you think that God would permit His own people to stay in the land and do the same things? Well, He would not. He allowed Assyria to come and carry them away into captivity.

Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets [[2Kings 17:13](#)].

God had sent the prophets Ahijah, Elijah, Micaiah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, and Hosea to these people in the northern kingdom of Israel. To the southern kingdom of Judah he had sent the prophets Shemaiah, Joel, Isaiah, and Micah. Later on He will be sending Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah. Every prophet warned the people of both kingdoms what would take place if they did not return to God and forsake their evil ways.

Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God [[2Kings 17:14](#)].

What was the basic sin? They were guilty of unbelief. The great sin of mankind is our refusal to believe God. You and I are living in a contemporary culture that has ruled God out. He has no place in our educational system. He is not appealed to by our government officials. Unfortunately, neither is He appealed to by many of our churches today. As a result, God will judge us as He judged His own people long ago.

And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them [[2Kings 17:15](#)].

The northern kingdom was taken into captivity. What about the southern kingdom?

Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made [[2Kings 17:19](#)].

Judah will not profit from Israel's experience, as we shall see.

And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin [[2Kings 17:20-21](#)].

You will recall that Jeroboam instituted calf worship in Israel.

For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;

Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day [[2Kings 17:22-23](#)].

"Unto this day" means, of course, the day 2 Kings was written.

Israel's Cities Repopulated With Foreigners (17:26-29)

When the king of Assyria took the northern kingdom captive, he brought in other people to inhabit the land. The area of the northern kingdom was called Samaria. The Samaritans of the New Testament are the descendants of the colonists brought in by the king of Assyria. This is their beginning.

Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land.

Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.

Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt [[2Kings 17:26-29](#)].

This brings us to the end of the northern kingdom. The land has become a mixture of peoples, and there is a great deal of intermarriage. The ten tribes will never again form the northern kingdom. They are scattered now, but they are not lost.

Chapter 18

THEME: Revival and testing under Hezekiah

Now we come to King Hezekiah. This section is so remarkable that it is not only recorded here in 2 Kings, but also in 2 Chronicles, and in the historical section of the prophecy of Isaiah.

We have just seen that the northern kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by Assyria. God gives three reasons why this happened: Israel disobeyed God, they doubted God, and they defied God. During the same period the southern kingdom of Judah had a very wonderful king. From this point on we shall be following only the history of the southern kingdom since the northern kingdom is out of the picture. The reason God did not send Judah into captivity at this time is because Judah did have a few good kings who were responsible for a time of revival.

Hezekiah was one of these. In fact, he was the best king who reigned in the land after David.

Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did [[2Kings 18:1-3](#)].

Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, was a very wicked king; yet he had this wonderful son. This leads us to believe that the mother of Hezekiah was a very fine mother and a godly woman. We are told here that her name was Abi.

Judah's Revival Under Hezekiah (18:4-6)

He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan [[2Kings 18:4](#)].

Hezekiah was a remarkable man. He led his people in a revival and began by attempting to remove idolatry from the land.

This verse mentions the brazen serpent that Moses put up in the wilderness (see [Num. 21:1-9](#)). What happened to that serpent that Moses had made? Well, it had been kept. Naturally it would be a tremendous memento, and it was kept in the temple. Then the day came when the children of Israel began to worship it! Instead of looking at it in faith as their fathers had, when they had been bitten by poisonous serpents in the wilderness as a judgment from God for rebellion, they began to worship it. Now it was a stumbling block. They had forgotten the meaning of it. The serpent pointed to Christ according to [John 3:14-15](#) which says, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." The brazen serpent was a symbol that was fulfilled by Christ. These people had turned the thing all around and had begun to worship the serpent instead of God.

As I have studied the seven churches of Asia Minor, I have noted that in the city of Pergamos (more correctly, Pergamum), the serpent was worshiped. It seems the children of Israel were doing the same thing. They burned incense to the brazen serpent and called it Nehushtan. Now Hezekiah broke it in pieces. It was time to get rid of it.

There is a great spiritual lesson in this. There are certain organizations, certain movements, and certain methods that God has used in the past. Unfortunately, folk did not know when God was through with them, and they refused to disband them. I could name half a dozen organizations that I am confident God raised up and which served a great purpose, but which went to seed. They continued operating for no other reason than to perpetuate jobs for those they employed. They became Nehushtan. They became brazen serpents that at one time had served a purpose and were mightily used by God. Then the day came when God was through with them.

I have been in churches where people have been using the same methods for years and years. They say, "This is the way we have always done it." It may be that it is time to change some of those methods -- there is no monotony with God. Do you realize that Paul never gave an invitation for people to come forward after a service? Apparently Dwight L. Moody began that practice. Now most evangelists think they have to give an invitation for people to come forward, and I have seen it actually become a stumbling block. God led Moody to do it, but He may not lead you to do it. Although I was pastor in a downtown Los Angeles church and there were many converts who responded to the invitation at the Sunday services, my most solid converts were those who were saved in the Bible study on Thursday night when no invitation was given. What God leads someone else to do, He may not lead you to do. You can certainly begin worshiping the equivalent of a brazen serpent and call it Nehushtan.

I have spent some time on this subject because I think it is important. Thank God that Hezekiah got rid of the serpent. I am of the opinion that many of the long-faced saints really criticized Hezekiah. They probably said, "He has gotten rid of our marvelous, wonderful, brazen serpent." Well, thank God he broke it to pieces, friend. If you have a few little idols lying around your church or in your life, I suggest you get rid of them. Maybe there is some method or some particular way you have of doing things that you ought to change.

He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses [2Kings 18:5-6].

If there was none after Hezekiah to compare to him, and none before him, then we must conclude that he was outstanding. He is on a par with David. He was a great king who was mightily used of God. That is the reason that his life is given to us in three books of the Old Testament: 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah.

The First Invasion Of Judah (18:7-16)

And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken [[2Kings 18:7-10](#)].

Hezekiah was a courageous king. Under his command Judah rebelled against Assyria and defeated the Philistines. During the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, took Samaria. The northern kingdom was defeated. Now there was nothing, not even a barbed-wire fence, between Assyria and Judah. King Hezekiah was in a bad spot.

And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:

Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them [[2Kings 18:11-12](#)].

This is a review of Israel's captivity.

Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou putteth on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold [[2Kings 18:13-14](#)].

Hezekiah tried to rebel against Assyria, but he was not successful. Because he did not succeed, he will have to pay.

At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria [[2Kings 18:16](#)].

The Second Invasion Of Judah By Sennacherib (18:17-36)

And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-saris and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field [[2Kings 18:17](#)].

Sennacherib threatens Jerusalem with a great army.

And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? [[2Kings 18:18-19](#)].

Rab-shakeh attempts to frighten them by suggesting two things.

Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words.) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

Now, behold, thou trusted upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him [[2Kings 18:20-21](#)].

Knowing that Hezekiah is expecting aid from Egypt, Rab-shakeh ridicules Egypt as a bruised reed that would snap and pierce his hand the moment he put any weight on it. He says, "You won't get any help from Egypt!"

Now he attempts to knock out the second prop.

But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem? [[2Kings 18:22](#)].

When Hezekiah took away the high places, Sennacherib thought he was taking down the altars to the living and true God. He did not understand that Hezekiah was cleansing the land of pagan altars and idols and that his action was obedience, not sacrilege. The Jews were to worship God at the one altar in Jerusalem, and they approached Him only through a bloody sacrifice. It looked to Sennacherib, however, as if Hezekiah had thrown over his God just when he needed Him most.

Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them [[2Kings 18:23](#)].

This an insult and a strong expression of contempt for the military power of Judah.

Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall [[2Kings 18:26](#)].

The Jews were lined up on the wall of the city of Jerusalem hearing all that was going on. The officials of Judah say; "Speak to us in the Syrian language; we can understand it." Old Rab-shakeh said, "Not on your life -- this is going on television!" He was really demoralizing the troops.

Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria:

Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand [[2Kings 18:28-29](#)].

He is getting through to the people, brainwashing them with propaganda.

Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, the LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern:

Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us [[2Kings 18:30-32](#)].

He is attempting to persuade the Jews to surrender. He repeats that neither Hezekiah nor God can help them. He promises that their lives will be spared only through surrender. He is saying, "Make terms with me and I'll leave you in peace to enjoy your own homes for a time." Then he adds, "Even if we transplant you, it will be to a beautiful land like your own."

Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?

Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? [[2Kings 18:33-35](#)].

To Rab-shakeh this seemed a crushing and unanswerable argument. It was true that no god had ever delivered his people out of the king of Assyria's power. Of course he did not know that gods of the other countries were "no gods," while the living God was "the Lord of the whole earth."

But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not [[2Kings 18:36](#)].

Whatever impression his arguments may have made in the hearts of those who heard, no one said a word.

Chapter 19

THEME: Hezekiah's recourse to God and Isaiah's prophecy

As we have seen, Hezekiah came to the throne at a troubled, disturbed, and uncertain time in the land. The northern kingdom had been taken into captivity by Assyria. Now the Assyrian army has come to the gates of Jerusalem. This is enough to frighten Hezekiah, but added to this, Rab-shakeh, who is the henchman of the king of Assyria, is outside the gate sending out taunts and insults. He is boasting about the great things Assyria is going to do to Jerusalem, and he ridicules the idea that God can deliver them. Poor Hezekiah wilts under all of this, which is natural because Hezekiah is just learning to turn to the Lord and trust him.

Hezekiah Seeks Help From God (19:1-7)

And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD [[2Kings 19:1](#)].

Tearing his clothes and wearing sackcloth indicate Hezekiah's deep distress and heavy afflictions. Notice that he goes into the house of the Lord. That is a good place to go when you are in mental turmoil. It is time to turn to God.

And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz [[2Kings 19:2](#)].

I wonder if you have noted the parallel to the days in which we are living. We think of our nation as being Christian and sophisticated and of Hezekiah's nation as being uncivilized and halfway pagan. Well, in our disturbed condition have you heard of any of our politicians, educators, leaders, or military men turning to God and appealing to Him for deliverance? No! Instead the nation looks to the "expert" and listens to the man who has a high I.Q. to give the best advice. We have listened to men like that, friend, since I was a young man, and that is a long span now. We get farther and farther into the night. Our problems are mounting. Our difficulties are overwhelming today. Nowhere, not even in the church, do you hear anyone appeal to God. Our only chance is to turn to God in this dark and late hour in the history of our nation. We are a young nation, but we are already old and on the way out. History tells us that the life of most nations is around two hundred years. Instead of turning to God, it is always, "Let's get together. Let's try a new approach. Let's get a new method. Let's work on this problem from a different angle. Let's get an authority in psychology, or medicine, or government, or education, and they will show us the way out." My friend, all of these experts have moved us farther into the night, and we are in trouble. We need God. No nation ever needed God as this nation needs God right now. Thank God Hezekiah had enough sense to call upon God in his hour of need! He sent a delegation to God's prophet, Isaiah.

And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.

It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the

living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah [[2Kings 19:3-5](#)].

Notice Hezekiah says, "It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh . . ." He does not say "our God," he says "thy God." Poor Hezekiah -- maybe he is not very well acquainted with God, but he has enough sense to appeal to Him at a time like this. As a matter of fact, he has no other place to go at this moment.

And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land [[2Kings 19:6-7](#)].

This prophecy was fulfilled literally. Notice the encouragement that Isaiah gives to the king. He says, "Don't worry about this man. He is not going to come to your city. He is just a blowhard. He is boasting and blaspheming, but God has heard him and will deal with him. There is no need for you to worry."

Oh, if we would only learn to let God deal with our enemies. The trouble is that we deal with them, and when we do that, we move ourselves from the place of faith and trust in God so that God does not move in our behalf. The result is that we come out on the short end of the deal. The Lord can handle enemies much better than we can, just as He did in this case.

The Threatening Letter (19:8-14)

So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying [[2Kings 19:8-9](#)].

Rab-shekah returned to his master and found him carrying on a war with Libnah. And a threatening move of the king of Ethiopia kept him from returning to attack Jerusalem immediately. So he sends this letter of warning to Hezekiah.

Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?

Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezep, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar?

Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah? [[2Kings 19:10-13](#)].

It was a disturbing message. The king of Assyria had swept aside everything in his path. How did Hezekiah think he could escape?

And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD [[2Kings 19:14](#)].

My friend, we need to spread our disturbing letters before the Lord just as Hezekiah did. Since my radio program has been on the air, I have received some wonderful letters, but I have received some of the other kind too. I learned a long time ago to turn them over to the Lord, and let Him work the problem out. He is a specialist at this sort of thing. Hezekiah did a wise thing when he spread the letter out before the Lord.

Hezekiah's Prayer (19:15-19)

And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God [[2Kings 19:15-16](#)].

Notice how Hezekiah approaches God. Martin Luther prayed like that. My how these men could lay hold of God! Luther would cry out to God, "Lord, are you hearing me? Lord, hear me. Lord, let your ear be open to my prayer." Do you ever feel that God is not listening to you? This is the way Hezekiah felt.

Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them [[2Kings 19:17-18](#)].

What this man Rab-shakeh says is true. He is not boasting when he says that Assyria has swept everything before them and has cast each nation's gods into the fire.

Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only [[2Kings 19:19](#)].

God's Answer (19:20-35)

Now God will answer his prayer through Isaiah the prophet.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard [[2Kings 19:20](#)].

God says, "I was listening when you were praying to Me."

This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel [[2Kings 19:21-22](#)].

God intends to destroy the arm of Assyria.

By thy messengers thou hast reproached the LORD, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.

I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places [[2Kings 19:23-24](#)].

God here repeats the boast of the king of Assyria that mountains do not stop him, deserts do not stop him -- he digs wells for water. Rivers do not stop him -- he will find ways of drying them up.

Now God addresses the proud Assyrian king. He says that the rise and fall of nations is His doing. As Isaiah had written earlier, God calls Assyria the "rod of mine anger" and the "staff . . . mine indignation" (see [Isa. 10:5](#)).

Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.

Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up [[2Kings 19:25-26](#)].

That is, Assyria's victims were unable to make an effectual resistance because it was God who had put a fear in their hearts.

But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest [[2Kings 19:27-28](#)].

God says, "You have come into My land; you have made your boast. Now I am going to put My hook in your nose, pull you right out of My land, and send you home."

And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof [[2Kings 19:29](#)].

The Lord now addresses Hezekiah. Apparently the presence of the Assyrian army had prevented the farmers around Jerusalem from sowing their land. God promised that there would be enough volunteer growth to feed them, and even in the third year they would be able to sow their crops and reap them in peace. Sennacherib and his army would not be around to destroy their crops.

And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it [[2Kings 19:30-32](#)].

Isaiah is making a very bold statement, but it is the Word of the Lord. I am sure the people of Jerusalem are wondering if Isaiah is a true prophet. When Isaiah had made the prophecy that "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son," the people probably said, "My, that is a great prophecy. When will it take place?" Well, it wouldn't take place for seven hundred years, and none of them would be around to see its fulfillment. But now Isaiah is making a prophecy in a local situation, and they will see its fulfillment within days.

Here is the Assyrian army camped outside the gates of Jerusalem. This great army had swept everything before them. They were feared and dreaded in the ancient world. Now God says through Isaiah that they will not besiege the city of Jerusalem and that they will not even shoot an arrow into the city!

Now, you think that over for a moment. There are 185,000 soldiers around the walls of Jerusalem. Out of that number you would certainly find some trigger-happy soldier with a bow and arrow who would shoot at least one arrow over the wall. My friend, if he does that, Isaiah is not a true prophet of God. God says that not an arrow is going to fall in that city, and He says it by the mouth of Isaiah. That is the way the people of his day would know that he is a true prophet of God.

God says, "I'm going to save this city, and I will save it for two reasons."

For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake [[2Kings 19:34](#)].

He will do it for His name's sake -- God does many things for His name's sake -- and for David's sake. You see, God loved David. He did many things for David's sake.

And, my friend, David had a greater Son, a virgin-born Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will save sinners who trust Him -- for Christ's sake. And when a believer prays to the Father in Jesus' name, the Father answers for Christ's sake.

And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses [[2Kings 19:35](#)].

I love the way this translation reads, ". . . and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." Friend, the Assyrians did not wake in the morning. Why not? They were dead. Of course it means that when the folk inside the city awoke in the morning, they found about 185,000 dead bodies outside the city wall.

Sennacherib Is Assassinated By His Sons (19:36-37)

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt in Nineveh.

And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead [[2Kings 19:36-37](#)].

Sennacherib was slain by his sons. It is interesting that the prophecy concerning Assyria was literally fulfilled in that day.

Chapter 20

THEME: Hezekiah's illness and healing

This chapter is very meaningful to me because I have had an experience with illness and healing that is somewhat like Hezekiah's experience.

Keep in mind that Hezekiah was an outstanding king. There was none like him after David. "He did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did" -- this is God's testimony concerning him.

Hezekiah's Illness (20:1-6)

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live [[2Kings 20:1](#)].

Hezekiah's illness is recorded three times in Scripture ([2Kings 20](#); [2Chron. 32](#); and [Isa. 38](#)), and each account adds a little something to the total picture. It must have been a difficult task for Isaiah to deliver a death sentence to Hezekiah, the king. Very candidly, however, the sentence of death rests upon each one of us although we do not know the day or hour. The Scripture says, "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" ([Heb. 9:27](#)). This is a divine date. If each one of us knew the exact time we would die, would it not change our way of living? Even many Christians say, "Death is

way off yonder in the future. I won't worry about it now." Well, we may not worry about it, but we ought to live knowing that death will be the ultimate goal.

Many years ago when a fine young minister was told by his doctor that he had a recurrence of cancer and his days were limited, he sent out a letter to some of his friends. I was privileged to be included in that list and I was shaken when I read his letter. Let me give you an excerpt from it: "One thing I have discovered in the last few days. When a Christian is suddenly confronted with the sentence of death, he surely begins to give a proper evaluation of material things: my fishing gear, and books, and orchard are not nearly so valuable as they were a week ago." With that in mind, let us look at Hezekiah's experience.

Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,
saying,

I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before
thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is
good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore [[2Kings 20:2-3](#)].

Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord. I think I understand his position. Suppose you were told that you had cancer and neither you nor the doctor knew what the outcome would be. All of my life in the ministry I have visited people with cancer. I could understand how they could have cancer, but I never could understand how I could have it. It rocked me when the doctor told me I had cancer -- I could not believe it. When I had to accept the fact, I was not given any assurance at all that I would live -- nor have I any assurance today. I just know that I have cancer. May I say to you, it gives you a different set of values.

My life is a little different today. Many people have wondered about my conduct in certain areas. They ask, "Why did you resign as pastor of a church when you were still active?" I have no ambition in the ministry. God gave me the privilege of being pastor of a great church in its heyday and of conducting the largest midweek service in that day and generation. I considered that a privilege. But now my ambition is to live in such a way that I will please the Lord. It has caused me to change in many different ways. Someone said to me the other day, "You are trying to kill yourself in carrying on your radio ministry and holding conferences." You know, I am afraid if I don't, I am going to displease Him.

When I was taken to the hospital, I had no idea what the outcome of my illness would be. The nurse had to help me get into bed because I was so weak. I was not physically weak - - I was frightened; I am a coward. She asked, "Are you sick?" I replied, "No. I am scared to death!" She was a Christian nurse, and she smiled at that. I asked her to leave me alone for awhile, and I turned my face to the wall, just as Hezekiah did, and I cried out to God. I told Him that I did not want to die -- and I didn't want to die.

When we are ill, I believe we should go to God in prayer and ask others to pray for us. I believe in faith healing -- not in faith healers -- I know God can heal. Well, an acquaintance wrote me a letter in which she said, "I am not going to pray that you get well because I know that you are ready to go and be with the Lord. I am praying that He will take you home." I got an answer back to her in a hurry. I said, "Now look here. You

let the Lord handle this. Don't try and tell Him how I feel. I don't want to die. I want to live. I want to live as long as I can."

When I turned my face to the wall there in the hospital, I promised Him, "Lord, if you will raise me up, I will teach your Word everywhere I can go." That is what I have been trying to do. I don't want to let Him down because I don't want Him to say, "Well, look here, preacher, I will have to call you home because you are not doing what you said you would do." Friend, we have a different outlook on life when we are in a position like this. The doctor, a wonderful Christian man, has told me that he cannot help me, but my recovery has come from the hand of God. Of course, I told him that I wanted to know why he sends me a bill if God is the One doing the work. It is wonderful, friend, to be in a position where you have to trust the Lord. I have no other alternative. Where in the world am I going to go if I don't go to the Lord? I am trusting the Lord and I am not being pious when I say that -- it was forced on me.

Now Hezekiah was in that same position. Only God could help him. When he turned his head to the wall, he reminded the Lord that he had walked before Him in truth and with a perfect heart, and he had done that which was good in His sight.

And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD [[2Kings 20:4-5](#)].

The Lord had seen Hezekiah's tears. I am sure he has seen my tears, too, and yours.

And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake [[2Kings 20:6](#)].

This is great news that the Lord will heal him and extend his life fifteen more years!

Hezekiah's Recovery (20:7-11)

And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered [[2Kings 20:7](#)].

God used natural means to raise up Hezekiah, but He also used supernatural means. This is wonderful. It is what James is saying, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" ([James 5:14](#)).

There are two ways a person can be anointed with oil. One is ceremonial, and the other is medicinal. A great many people seem to have missed it, but James is talking about a medicinal anointing. God is saying through James that we should be very practical. The doctor should be called, but the elders of the church should also be called to pray. And the prayer will raise up the one who is sick.

In Hezekiah's case they put figs on the "boil" -- which may well have been cancer. God said, "I am going to add fifteen years to your life, but you had better put figs on that boil." Friend, my recommendation is not to be fanatical, but be sensible. If you have cancer, then face up to it. I wanted to know the facts and so did Hezekiah. Believe me, God laid it out before him, and God spared his life for fifteen more years.

And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? [[2Kings 20:8](#)].

Hezekiah asked for a sign to show that his life would be extended. The Lord has given me no sign whatsoever that my life will be lengthened. That, of course, is up to my heavenly Father, but I want Him to leave me here as long as He possibly can. If He has another plan, I will have to accept it.

It is not always God's will to extend our lives. I notice in the early church that James was a martyr -- he was executed by Herod. Peter, on the other hand, was delivered from prison. I do not know why one man was delivered and the other man became a martyr. All of that is in the providence of God. It is His will that we want. Let's pray, "Oh God, bend me and reconcile me to your will -- whatever it is." But I am going to let God know how I feel about it. I used to visit a dear lady who was in such pain that she knew she would not get well. She said, "Dr. McGee, don't pray for me to get well. Just pray that the Lord will take me." That is what the Lord did, by the way. But I do not pray that way unless the person wants me to do so.

And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz [[2Kings 20:9-11](#)].

Hezekiah's Foolishness (20:12-19)

Now we come to a phase in Hezekiah's life that blanches my soul.

At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick [[2Kings 20:12](#)].

He sends a get-well card and a gift.

And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not [[2Kings 20:13](#)].

Hezekiah did a foolish thing. He let the ambassadors from Babylon see the treasure that Solomon had gathered. The wealth of the world was there, which was not general knowledge. Hezekiah was big-hearted -- Babylon had sent him a get-well card, and so he gives these men from Babylon a guided tour of his kingdom.

Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them [[2Kings 20:14-15](#)].

He rolled out the red carpet and showed them everything.

And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.

Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD [[2Kings 20:16-17](#)].

These ambassadors made an inventory of all the riches and took it back to Babylon with them to wait for the proper time when they needed gold. When they wanted to get the treasure, they knew where to come.

And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon [[2Kings 20:18](#)].

This is what is going to happen to Hezekiah's offspring.

Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days? [[2Kings 20:19](#)].

I don't like Hezekiah's reply to Isaiah. It was not a confession of sin at all. Rather, he wanted peace in his day and showed little concern for his offspring upon whom the coming catastrophe would fall.

Hezekiah's Death (20:20-21)

And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead [[2Kings 20:20-21](#)].

This may seem like an awful thing for me to say, but Hezekiah should have died when the time came for him to die. Three things took place after God extended his life that were foolish acts: he showed his treasures to Babylon, which will cause great trouble in

the future; he begat a son, Manasseh, who was the most wicked of any king; he revealed an arrogance, almost an impudence, in his later years. His heart became filled with pride. [2Chronicles 32:25](#) tells us, "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem." You see, it might have been better if Hezekiah had died at God's appointed time.

That is why I want to be very careful. The Lord has spared me and I do not want to do anything to disgrace Him. My friend, this is a wonderful chapter. We have a wonderful heavenly Father.

Chapter 21

THEME: Manasseh's evil reign

Chapter 21 is quite a let-down after chapter 20, and yet there is a tremendous message here for us. Hezekiah was the best king since David -- there was none to compare with him. He was like David in another way: neither of these men were good fathers. Hezekiah fathered a son who was the worst king that ever reigned in the southern kingdom. It is a heartbreak when you read about Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, turning out the way he did. Now I cannot confirm the statement that I am about to make, but I believe that the shekinah glory -- the visible presence of God -- returned to heaven during the reign of Manasseh. As far as we can determine, the shekinah glory was present during the reign of Hezekiah, and I can't see any events that happened after the reign of Manasseh that would have caused the shekinah glory to leave. When God's presence left the temple, it was a desolate place, forsaken of God. As we look at the life of this man Manasseh, we will see his total abhorrence for the temple and all the things of God.

Manasseh's Sins (21:1-18)

Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah [[2Kings 21:1](#)].

Manasseh began his reign as a twelve-year-old boy. He was a rascal, but someone says, "He is young. He will outgrow it." Well, he did not outgrow it. He got worse and worse and worse. He reigned for fifty-five years. God gave him ample opportunity to change his ways. In 2 Chronicles we find that he did finally repent. God is always patient and long-suffering. He is not willing that any should perish.

Manasseh's mother's name is mentioned. Her name was Hephzibah. She will have to accept responsibility for her son. If there is any credit, she will receive that, too. She may have been a wonderful mother. I don't know how Hephzibah raised this boy, but Manasseh was as wicked as he could be, and the damage he did to his country was irreparable.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel [[2Kings 21:2](#)].

Manasseh was as bad as any of the pagans that God put out of the land when he brought His people into the land.

For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them [[2Kings 21:3](#)].

Hezekiah, you recall, had destroyed the pagan places of worship, and a partial revival took place under his influence. All of his work came to naught because Manasseh raised up altars for Baal, and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them -- which means he worshiped the sun, moon, and stars, and all the hosts of heaven that the Greeks named Apollo and Diana, etc. Manasseh was a wicked man.

Someone says, "My, but we have come a long way today." No, we haven't. We are seeing a strong resurgence of astrology, and multitudes of "civilized" folk live by the horoscope. Many people still worship the host of heaven today.

And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.

And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD [[2Kings 21:4-5](#)].

Manasseh defied Almighty God. He put up pagan altars in the house of the Lord where God had said, "Here is where I will set My name."

And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger [[2Kings 21:6](#)].

He even made his own son pass through the fire or into the fire. This was actually a human sacrifice. An image was heated until it was red-hot and then a baby was placed in it as an offering! It was a horrible, sadistic, satanic form of idolatrous worship.

And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them [[2Kings 21:7-8](#)].

These people did not know it at the time, but they were getting ready to travel. They were headed for Babylonian captivity, because the land was theirs on one condition: obedience.

But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel [[2Kings 21:9](#)].

Not only was Manasseh as bad as the heathen, he was worse. I have news for him: God will not tolerate the Israelites' wickedness. He will put them out of the land.

And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols:

Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.

And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down [[2Kings 21:10-13](#)].

Just as God had judged Samaria and all Israel, God is now going to judge Jerusalem and all Judah. God said he will "wipe Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish" -- God is going to do some dishwashing. Jerusalem is His land -- His dish -- the Israelites have made it filthy; so He is going to wipe them out of it.

You may be very clever and sophisticated and think you don't need God, but you are walking on His earth, breathing His air, using His sunshine, and drinking His water. He even gave you the body that you have. Every now and then He washes His dishes. Nations down through the centuries lie along the highway of time in rubble and ruin. Do you know why? They did the same thing that our nation is doing today: living without God, feeling no need of God. God said that He was going to wipe Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish, and He did just that.

And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies [[2Kings 21:14](#)].

God says that He is going to take His finger out of the dike and let the enemy come in like a flood.

Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD [[2Kings 21:16](#)].

When a man or a nation goes into sin, they don't sin in just one respect; they sin in many respects. Now we have not only forgotten God, we have become an immoral nation. Lawlessness and murder are the order of the day. Some companies have moved away from large cities, trying to get away from lawlessness. Well, we cannot get away from it until this nation returns to God. That is the first step.

Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead [[2Kings 21:17-18](#)].

This is the story of Manasseh. There is not much to say except that he was evil and corrupt, and he died.

Amon's Brief Reign (21:19-23)

Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did.

And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them:

And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD [[2Kings 21:19-22](#)].

Amon is a bad one, too -- he walked in his father's footsteps. He forsook the Lord. Therefore, the Lord forsook him.

And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house [[2Kings 21:23](#)].

Amon's wickedness led to revolution. Today we as a nation are on the way to revolution. It is unfortunate that our leaders seem to be interested only in getting elected. It seems that they are actually willing to sell their country in order to do that. We are living in dangerous days, friend.

Josiah Reigns Over Judah (21:24-26)

And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead [[2Kings 21:24-26](#)].

This section brings us to the last of the great kings. Josiah was not only a great king, but the greatest revival took place during the time of his reign.

CHAPTERS 22 AND 23

Chapter 22

THEME: Josiah's good reign

In chapter 22 and 23 we find that Josiah, who begins to reign when he is eight years old and reigns for thirty-one years, is one of the best kings who reigned after Solomon. During his reign a great and needed revival comes to the nation. Hilkiah, the high priest, is his counselor, assistant, and adviser.

Josiah's Good Life (22:1-2)

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath [[2Kings 22:1](#)].

Notice how young these kings are when they begin to reign. Why are they so young? Well, Papa got killed. God removed him.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left [[2Kings 22:2](#)].

The sun has come up again; the light is shining once more in the land. Josiah has come to the throne. He led a movement that resulted in the greatest revival these people ever had after David and Solomon.

It is my firm conviction today that the only thing that can save our nation is revival. It is either going to be revival or revolution. There is corruption in government on all levels. There is corruption in all organizations today. Immorality and lawlessness abound. Sex, liquor, drugs, filthy magazines, foul pictures, scandals, and riots reign. This nation is wallowing like a pig in a swine's sty. We are like the prodigal son in a far country in the pigpen with the pigs. Without revival, revolution stares us in the face. Socialism is creeping in today. Political parties are willing to sell the birthright of this nation in order to stay in power. The church today is under the blight of apostasy. Liberalism controls the organized church. There is a brazen denial of the Word of God even in so-called evangelical circles. The Word of God has been lost in the church, and there are atheists today in the pulpit.

The first thing Christians need to recognize is that revival is personal and individual. I don't think revival has ever begun as a mass movement. What we need today is not politicians calling other politicians crooks. We need politicians who will say, "I have been wrong. I am going to get right with God." It would be a strange thing, and I suppose it would frighten our nation, but it's what we need.

Josiah, the man at the top, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. The revival began with him.

The Temple Is Repaired (22:3-6)

And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people [[2Kings 22:3-4](#)].

The second thing that Josiah did was to repair the temple. Apparently, the temple was not in use when Josiah came to the throne. It had become sort of a warehouse, a storage area for odds and ends.

And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house.

Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house [[2Kings 22:5-6](#)].

He tells the people to get busy and repair the temple.

The church today is very much like the temple in Josiah's day. It is in great need of repair. I am not speaking of church buildings -- there are many beautiful church buildings. I stayed in a motel back east some time ago, and there was a church right across the street from my room. I was told that it cost one-half million dollars to build. The week I was there I noticed on Sunday morning, as I was leaving for my speaking appointment, that there were about twenty-five cars parked by the church for the Sunday morning service. There weren't any more than twenty-five cars for the evening service, and the rest of the week the church was dark. That place needs repairing, let me tell you!

Our conservative churches today are torn asunder by strife and bickering. They are huge and attractive. But is the Spirit of God there? The church is not witnessing. True believers should be out telling people about the Lord. You frighten Christians when you talk about witnessing for Christ. We do not need any more pious platitudes, saccharin sweetness, back-slapping, and hand-pumping. Let's let these service clubs do that. They are better at it than we are anyway. What we need today is to get the church straightened out on the inside.

The Book Of The Law Is Discovered (22:8-20)

And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it [[2Kings 22:8](#)].

The third thing that brought revival to the nation was a return to the Word of God. They had lost the Bible, and they had lost it in the church. But they found the Word of God and put it back into their lives. The Word of God is the only thing we have as a weapon, friend. It is God's Word that is alive, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword ([Heb. 4:12](#)). There is no short cut, no easy route, no new method to revival. We have a flood of books today on Christian experience. I have looked over quite a few of these books and find them as dead as a doornail. What is the problem? They present a method instead of presenting the Word of God. They are not saying, "Let's get back to the Word of God." We don't need So-and-So's book; we need the Bible. We don't need the book of the month; we need the Book of the ages.

How many churches today in this land really rest upon the Word of God and preach it? Although there are still many faithful pastors, there are many who have departed from the faith. They have lost the Bible in church. Remember when Jesus was a boy, Mary and

Joseph lost Him in the temple. Believe me, Jesus, as well as the Bible, is lost in the church today. Hilkiah, the high priest, found the Word of God. Did he find it out on the dump heap? No! He found it in the temple. It had been lost. A return to the Bible has to be the beginning of a revival.

I was with a fine young preacher not long ago. He was questioning me about my method of study. I found out that he had read all the latest books. In fact, he rather embarrassed me when he asked, "Have you read So-and-So? Have you seen this book and the other book?" I said no to each one. He asked, "Have you quit reading books?" I said, "Well, I'm pretty much read up, and the new books coming out don't seem to interest me because they are presenting a method." He said, "What do you read then?" I told him that I read the Bible. Then I asked him the pointed question, "How much time do you spend each week in the Word of God?" His answer was amazing. He spent less than one hour a week studying God's Word! He had already told me about the problems he was having, and it was very easy to give him a remedy. He needed to get into the Word of God.

And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.

And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king [2Kings 22:9-10].

Imagine this! Now Josiah is hearing the Word of God for the first time!

And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes [2Kings 22:11].

The fourth step toward revival is repentance. The reading of the Word of God brought repentance. When the king heard the Word of God, he tore his clothes as an expression of deep emotion. Why? Because the Word of God revealed their sin. Without the Word of God they did not realize how far they had strayed from God's Law. A return to the Word of God brings revival. It wasn't like some of these nice little groups I often hear about today that are going to have a "revival" campaign. They have a banquet and call in all of the preachers. The object is to talk sweetly and optimistically and get everyone together. My friend, real revival does not come unless there is true repentance.

I heard of a man, a very fine Christian, who stood before a group of church officers and told them, "What this church needs is for this group of officers to get down on their faces before God and repent!" Do you know what they did? They got rid of him. They didn't want him around. Oh, if we would really come to the Word of God, it would bring conviction. There would be weeping and rending of clothes and a real revival.

Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do

according unto all that which is written concerning us [[2Kings 22:13](#)].

Josiah is frightened because he knows they deserve God's judgment.

The message God returns to Josiah through Huldah the prophetess reveals both God's justice and His grace.

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched [[2Kings 22:16-17](#)].

Now notice God's grace to Josiah.

Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and has rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, said the LORD.

Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again [[2Kings 22:19-20](#)].

Chapter 23

Josiah's Further Reforms (23:1-18)

And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant [[2Kings 23:1-3](#)].

The people said that not only would they read the Word of God, they would also walk it - they would live in the manner it prescribed.

We could have revival in many of our churches, but there must be a conviction of sin that only the Word of God can bring. When the Bible brings conviction to the heart,

repentance must follow. To repent means to make things right, my friend. Repentance means to turn around and go in the opposite direction. If you are going the wrong way, you turn around and go the right way.

I heard of an evangelist who held meetings in upper New York State years ago. He preached for a week, and not one person made a move toward God. Then one night the leading deacon in the church came forward, shedding tears of repentance. That broke the meeting wide open because he was the one standing in the way of revival in that church. He apologized to someone he had wronged, and all during the night as he prayed, the Lord would convict him of something else -- his life hadn't been right. He would go over and knock on the door of the person he had wronged, and say, "I'm here to make things right." That went on all night! Imagine getting folk out of bed in the middle of the night! By morning there was a revival going on in that town because one man repented.

Now Josiah as king has a tremendous influence. He will now put into operation a very bold plan. His repentance put him in first gear, and he started moving out.

First he put idolatry out of the temple of God.

And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el [[2Kings 23:4](#)].

All of the things that pertain to the worship of false gods were burned in the fields of Kidron, outside of the city of Jerusalem. The ashes were then taken out of town so that the people could not even look to the ashes.

Then Josiah put away immorality.

And he brake down the house of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove [[2Kings 23:7](#)].

Today the church is looking upon homosexuality as permissible behavior. God says in [Romans 1:26, 27](#) that He gave up a people because of this unnatural thing. I'm of the opinion that God will give this nation up if we continue smiling upon the unnatural sex orgies that are taking place in our land.

Josiah had the courage to condemn the sodomites. He not only condemned their actions, he put them out of the kingdom. Unnatural sex is wrong even if the church today condones it. I know that there are groups that say, "We ought to accept this sort of thing among consenting adults and even among consenting teenagers. It is perfectly all right." Who told them it was all right? Somebody says, "Well, I think it is all right." Well, my friend, that judgment is no bigger than your little mind -- and you may have a Ph.D. Your little mind and my little mind are not big enough to make judgments like that. God has said that sodomy will bring down His wrath. It has in the past, and He has not changed. We have changed, but God has not changed. Josiah was a brave man, and he got rid of the sodomites.

Josiah also stopped the offering of human sacrifices -- children -- to Molech.

And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech [[2Kings 23:10](#)].

Josiah also broke down images, altars, high places, and groves that kings before him had brought into the land. He even went beyond the borders of Judah -- as far north as Bethel. [2Chronicles 34:33](#) sums it up in one verse: "And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the LORD their God. And all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers."

It is interesting that at Bethel he came upon the grave of the prophet who had predicted he would do these things ([1Kings 13:2](#)).

Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el.

And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria [[2Kings 23:17-18](#)].

Now Josiah makes a tremendous positive move. He reinstitutes the Passover.

The Passover Is Reinstigated (23:21-23)

And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.

Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem [[2Kings 23:21-23](#)].

The holding of the Passover is a wonderful thing. Apparently it had not been kept for a long time; they had passed it by. What does it mean? The Passover speaks of Christ. The people had forgotten all about Him. Paul says, ". . . For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" ([1Cor. 5:7](#)). Today we are trying to have religion without Christ. The deity of Christ is ridiculed in seminaries and in pulpits. The value of Christ's death is rejected and spurned. The efficacy of Christ's blood is hooted down as something evil -- even by some men in the pulpit.

My friend, the only thing that can save our nation is revival. Somebody asks, "Can it come?" Yes, I believe it can come. There is a "sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees" today. A flood tide came in the sixteenth century, which was led by the Reformers Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. Wycliffe and John Knox in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were the Reformers before the Reformation. In the seventeenth century came

another spiritual awakening known as the Puritan movement. In the eighteenth century, a time of darkness and deism, came another great spiritual awakening led by Wesley and Whitfield. In the nineteenth century there was a mighty turning to God in Oxford, and the missionary movement resulted. Toward the end of the century great revivals were led by Moody and Finney. In the twentieth century (hear me now very carefully) there has been no great world-sweeping, earth-shaking revival. There have been a few local revivals. The twentieth century is quickly drawing to an end. Look around you today. When we had a depression in this country, we did not turn to God as a nation. We were plunged into World War II and saw the spilling of American blood that had not been equaled. That experience apparently did not teach us a thing. There was no revival. Since then we have had the Korean and the Vietnam wars. Neither did they bring us back to God.

Many people seem to think that if they get out and protest, things will change. But what we need is some real deep conviction on the inside. We need to recognize our coldness and indifference. When was the last time you confessed your coldness and indifference to the Lord? Have you told Him today that you love Him? He is your Savior, my friend, and I am convinced that even in this dark hour, as has happened in the past, we can have a revival. The story of Josiah encourages me. It was in the darkest hour in the life of his nation that revival came.

Josiah's Death (23:29-30)

Now we come to a heartbreak in this story of Josiah. Great revival had come near the end of the kingdom of Judah. Soon his people will go into captivity. God moved in a mighty way to reveal the fact that He can send revival in the most difficult and dark days.

Now what ended the revival?

In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him [[2Kings 23:29](#)].

Josiah should have stayed home. He should have kept his nose out of it. This was not his fight, but he went out anyway. What happened? He was slain at Megiddo. (By the way, Megiddo in the great Valley of Esdraelon is the place where the War of Armageddon is to be fought in the last days.) Josiah was a great man of God, but he was foolish. He entered a battle that was none of his concern.

This story might be a message for another nation I know about. I am afraid that we have meddled enough throughout the world today. We need to recognize that the only message that America has for the world is not democracy but the Word of God. We were blessed when we were sending out God's Word. Today we are sending out propaganda and we have become an immoral nation. God is not in the things we do as a nation, and we are no longer being blessed.

And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead [[2Kings 23:30](#)].

Jehoahaz Reigns And Is Dethroned (23:31-33)

Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold [[2Kings 23:31-33](#)].

You would think that Jehoahaz would follow in the righteous steps of his father, but he did not. Jehoahaz was an evil king. As a matter of fact, he hardly got the throne warm sitting on it -- he lasted for only three months. Pharaoh didn't like the way he was reigning. He removed him from the throne and took him down to the land of Egypt, where he died.

Jehoiakim Is Made King (23:34-37)

And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done [[2Kings 23:34,37](#)].

Jehoiakim was another son of Josiah, and he reigned for eleven years. He also was an evil king. We go from bad to worse. Jehoahaz was bad; Jehoiakim was worse.

At this time the great power of Babylon is rising in the east on the Euphrates River. Babylon is displacing Assyria. Babylon, in fact, overcame Assyria. Babylon will also overcome Egypt and become the first great world power, as we will see in the Book of Daniel. It is at this point that we ought to read the Book of Jeremiah, because Jeremiah was the great prophet during this era. He was the one calling Israel back to God and warning them that if they do not turn to God they will be taken captive and sent to Babylon. Jeremiah's words seemed unbelievable to the people of Israel, because at this time Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon was not a formidable foe. The false prophets were telling the nation that God simply could not get along without them. Jerusalem was the city of God; His holy temple was there; they were His chosen people. He couldn't get along without them. Well, they will find that He could get along without them. Actually, He didn't need that temple; it would soon be destroyed.

CHAPTERS 24 AND 25

Chapter 24

THEME: The kingdom of Judah goes into captivity

Nebuchadnezzar Comes Against Judah (24:1-4)

In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him [[2Kings 24:1](#)].

Egypt's Pharaoh-nechoh had put Jehoiakim on the throne, but he lost all Egypt's Asiatic possessions to Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar. Now when Nebuchadnezzar comes against Judah, Jehoiakim knuckles under for three years, then rebels against him.

And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did [[2Kings 24:2-3](#)].

As we have seen, Manasseh was an evil man. If the shekinah glory didn't depart during his reign, there was nothing worse afterward that would have caused it to depart. Because these people did not depart from the sins of Manasseh, they will be going into captivity.

And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon [[2Kings 24:4](#)].

While it is true that God will pardon all sin, the sinner will have to come to Him in repentance. There are certain sins that are not pardonable. Although Christ died for all sins, they are not pardonable because men will not come to Christ in repentance. My friend, He is the only One in the world who can forgive your sin. He died for you and paid the penalty for your sins. Who else can forgive your sins? He alone is the way, the truth, and the life.

Jehoiakim Dies, And Jehoiachin Reigns (24:5-9)

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead [[2Kings 24:5-6](#)].

The names of father and son are so similar, it is easy to confuse them.

And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt [[2Kings 24:7](#)].

This is the exact land that God had vouchsafed to Abraham and to those who came after him. Why was Babylon, instead of Israel, in control of this area now?

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done [[2Kings 24:8-9](#)].

This is the reason. They have continued in sin and in their rebellion against God. Remember that God had given them the occupancy of the land on one condition: their obedience. Did they still own the land? Oh, yes. God had given them the land by an unconditional covenant. But their occupancy was conditional, and they failed to meet that condition.

Jehoiachin Is Taken Captive (first Deportation) (24:10-15)

At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.

And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.

And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign [[2Kings 24:10-12](#)].

The king and all the nobility were carried away in the first group that went into captivity. This took place about 605 B.C.

And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.

And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon [[2Kings 24:13-15](#)].

This is a sad and sordid story.

Zedekiah Is Made King By Nebuchadnezzar (24:17-20)

And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done [[2Kings 24:17-19](#)].

Zedekiah was Jehoiachin's uncle. He did not improve the line of kings. You would think that the captivity would sober him. It did not at all. Trouble will do one of two things for an individual. It will either soften or harden you. It will either draw you to God or drive

you away from God. You can never be the same after you experience trouble and suffering. The sun will soften wax, but the sun will harden clay. It is the same sun that softens one and hardens the other.

For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon [[2Kings 24:20](#)].

Once again the false prophets said, "Look, God is on our side." But God was not on Israel's side because Israel was not on God's side.

Presumption is something many people need to be careful about. I have heard people say, "I am doing this certain thing because I know it is God's will. He has revealed it to me." Then they go ahead and do whatever they had in mind, and they fail. God was not in it at all. I know missionaries who have gone to the field and come back to say, as one young man said to me, "I made a mistake in going out." "But," I said, "you told me you were in God's will. You were sure." He said, "I thought I was." Well, we had better not think so, we had better be sure when we begin to talk about God being on our side. Actually we should make sure not that God is on our side but that we are on His side.

This was Judah's problem. They were far from God, yet they felt that they were God's people and He would protect them.

In chapter 25 we see the final deportation of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came three times against Jerusalem. He deported the royalty and the military and the skilled workmen, but he did not destroy the city until he came the third time.

We have seen that Nebuchadnezzar had made Zedekiah king of Judah, but after a few years Zedekiah rebelled, and now we see that Nebuchadnezzar comes the final time and makes an end of Judah.

Chapter 25

The Siege (25:1-7)

And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it: and they built forts against it round about.

And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah [[2Kings 25:1-2](#)].

The exactness of the date indicates the extreme importance of this siege. It was the beginning of the end of Jerusalem.

And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land [[2Kings 25:3](#)].

The intensity of the suffering is described for us in Lamentations.

And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's

garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.

And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him [[2Kings 25:4-6](#)].

The enemy broke into the city, and the king with his troops tried to escape. But they were captured. The prophet Jeremiah had predicted the fall of Jerusalem, and he was considered a traitor because he told the people the truth.

And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon [[2Kings 25:7](#)].

This man was deceived by false prophets but would not listen to God's prophet. Now he is carried away into captivity, blinded.

Jerusalem Is Burned (25:9-14)

And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire [[2Kings 25:9](#)].

Because of the rebellion of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar burned and leveled it to such an extent that when Nehemiah came to the city seventy years after the Captivity and looked upon that place, it almost seemed hopeless. But he rallied the people, and the biggest thing he had to overcome was discouragement. The armies of Nebuchadnezzar had devastated the city. The false prophets had insisted that God would not let the city be destroyed. They were indeed false prophets.

There are people today who are giving this country a false message. They are saying that Americans belong to the ten "lost" tribes of Israel. They are saying that God is on our side, and He won't let us down. My friend, God does not need us. Where did that notion come from? God sent His chosen people into captivity. It was a sad day for them. And it ought to be a lesson for us in this day.

And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away.

But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen [[2Kings 25:10-12](#)].

They left those who would be of no value to them. Also they wanted the land to continue to produce so they could exact tribute from it.

And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away [[2Kings 25:13-14](#)].

The army of Nebuchadnezzar really cleaned house. The temple was cleaned out before it was destroyed with fire. All that wealth was carried away into Babylon. We will have occasion, when we get to the Book of Daniel, to find that those vessels from the temple had been stored away and were brought out when Belshazzar had his great banquet. Jerusalem was plundered, burned, and left a pile of rubble.

Jerusalem has been destroyed about twenty-seven times. Each time the city has been rebuilt upon the rubble. The hill that is Jerusalem today is largely built upon the rubble of past cities. Many people, especially tour agents, say, "Go to Jerusalem and walk where Jesus walked." Well, my friend, you will not be walking where Jesus walked. The city that Jesus lived and walked in is buried under tons of rubble. At some spots you have to look down twenty feet, twenty-five feet, sometimes forty-five feet to see the city where Jesus lived.

Gedaliah Appointed Governor (25:24-26)

And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you [[2Kings 25:24](#)].

Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah to govern the people who were left in the land. They should have listened to him -- and to the prophet Jeremiah -- who urged them to settle down and accept this form of government. Instead of that, they assassinate the governor Gedaliah!

But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.

And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees [[2Kings 25:25-26](#)].

A great company of them fled into Egypt and became colonists down there. By the way, Jeremiah went with this group -- not willingly, but he was forced to go.

Jehoiachin Released (25:27-30)

And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;

And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life [[2Kings 25:27-30](#)].

Evil-merodach extends amnesty as he comes to the throne of Babylon. Although other captured kings are in his court, Jehoiachin is given a position of honor among them. It is interesting that the period of the kings should conclude with kindness being shown to this last descendant of David who had grown old in a Babylonian prison.

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Note: The dates listed are those of the first printings.